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ESSAYS
ON THE
DWELLINGS OF THE POOR
AND
OTHER SUBJECTS

SECOND EDITION.

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ESSAYS
ON THE
DWELLINGS OF THE POOR,
AND
OTHER SUBJECTS.

BY RUFUS USHER.

SECOND EDITION.

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COTTAGES OF THE RURAL POOR.

AMONGST the various forms in which human misery is found to exist, whether arising from unavoidable misfortune, the result of unseen and fortuitous events, or the more calamitous effects of debasing habits ; whether assuming a mental or physical form, there are but few, if any, instances but admit of alleviation or mitigation from the hands of humanity.

Absolute poverty, or indigence, being one amongst many nameless evils which "flesh is heir to," and one also of a most prominent character, it must ever claim a considerable share of attention from those who have accustomed themselves to reflect on the nature of human happiness and misery ; and to procure the elevation of that class of persons who are its victims, nothing which affords the slightest chance of success ought to be considered a matter of indifference. The scantiness of the pecuniary resources of many of the labouring poor, viewed abstractedly, is one of the great ruling causes of the apparent wretchedness existing amongst them ; and although the state of society renders it improbable that any considerable addition will be made to these resources, it is still some satisfaction to the philanthropic mind to recognize, independently of this, additional funds of comfort, which may be added without subjecting the possessors of property to those sacrifices which so few are willing to make on behalf of their less fortunate fellow beings.

Next to the blessing of a more extended education, as a means of improvement amongst the poor, nothing is

more highly calculated to effect a desirable change in their condition than an attention to the commodiousness of their dwellings. Few errors of greater magnitude, or more fatal in their effects, have been committed by society, than those which relate to the structure and situation of the cottages of the poor; indeed, I know of nothing which reflects greater discredit on the wealthy, than the inattention shown in this respect to their domestic comforts. It is of no avail, as an argument against this charge, to say that the cottages of the poor are appropriate to their standing in society, or that they are as good as they can afford to occupy; for I shall, I hope, be able to show that the improvement of these huts would increase the wealth of the owners, as well as add to the enjoyment of the occupier. It is, indeed, a most erroneous notion, to suppose that every benefit conferred, and every attempt made to improve the social condition of the poor, must necessarily be attended with the sacrifice of wealth; on the contrary, it may be taken almost as a rule, that all improvements in the physical and moral condition of the poor are but so many indirect means of opening to the higher classes of society a new field of acquirement.

It is not coming to a fair conclusion to say, that because a person's income is extremely limited, he is making the best of that little by renting as small a house as he can obtain at the lowest possible rent; for its real value will depend, even then, upon the comforts and conveniences it affords him. A very cheap cottage is, in many respects, not unlike a very cheap garment; it is very well as regards its original cost, but if, from its immediately becoming threadbare, it adds nothing to the comfort of the wearer, or if, from its continual want of fresh outlay, an additional expense is incurred, it proves in the end but a sorry bargain. The worst description of cottages, such for instance as are found in great number in Bucking-

hamshire, have but one room, in which the inmates eat, drink, and sleep ; but as these beggar all description, I will leave them to their wretched occupants, and attempt a comparison between the next class and cottages of a superior order. We will take, as an example, the cottage at one shilling per week, and the one rented at fifteen or eighteen pence per week. The first of these, we will suppose, as is generally the case, to have but one small room on the ground-floor, and one sleeping-room of the same dimensions, but neither garden nor out-house. The other may be supposed to have one and sometimes two rooms on the ground-floor, two bed-rooms, with a hovel and garden in addition.

Previously to the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, it was not to be expected that cottages of a very superior order would be built for the accommodation of that class of the poor who might peremptorily demand a dwelling as their legal right ; nor is it to be wondered that the members of select vestries, on whom the entire government of the poor then devolved, should, when repeated applications were made to them for houses, and they were under the necessity of erecting new ones, have exercised that economy which the great majority of them so plainly indicate to have been observed. I should be sorry, therefore, in endeavouring to recognize and point out the evil of such buildings, to tax individuals with thoughtlessness and neglect, where the system under which they acted was most to be blamed. On the other hand, making due allowances for the defectiveness of those laws which operated in lessening the attention of the public to the domestic comforts of the poor, those who have framed so many of these wretched huts on their own private account are not to be exonerated from some blame, because it was necessary, even under the old system, that some outward distinction should have existed

to recognize the independent labourer, renting on his own account, from those who, to the fullest extent, claimed the indulgence of parish relief. The evil is, however, still in existence, and, as it is being still perpetuated, its effects ought to be fully considered.

This is, most unfortunately, a subject that can scarcely be judged of, or represented by analogy, because it is difficult to give any definite idea of the inconveniences to which the inmates of small cottages are subject, by a comparison drawn from similar evils existing in the other classes of society. Many a tradesman, however, who has at one time occupied such small premises as scarcely to be able to place one foot before the other without committing some depredation on his own property, and who has fortunately exchanged them for others of more capacious extent, can at least form some idea of the vast difference that must exist between the situation of one family being crammed into a room nine or ten feet square, in which all the drudgery of the house must be performed; and that of another, having two rooms on the ground-floor, or if but one, having in addition a hovel or out-house, with one or two extra bed-rooms; and he can also form some idea of the superior advantages which nearly the same weekly income must give the one over the other.

Taking the specimens of cottages from those tenanted by agricultural labourers, it will generally be found that, from ninepence to one shilling per week, they are of a most wretched character; whilst those from fifteen to eighteen pence are neat, and have at least some conveniences. The fundamental difference may then be stated at sixpence, or at most at ninepence per week; and to a family whose average weekly income is not more than fourteen or fifteen shillings, it is an important consideration: but in the cottage of the poor, as well as that

of the tradesman, losses are incurred on the one hand, and gain is originated on the other, from scantiness of room connected with the one, and from capaciousness belonging to the other. Many a poor woman is seen to outstrip her neighbour in point of decent appearance, in the extent of her pecuniary resources, and in the credit she obtains. The most common sentence pronounced on the contrast so often observed in the appearance of two poor families is, that the mother of the one is more industrious, and a better manager, than the mother of the other; and this sentence may sometimes be correct: but I have frequently observed, where the different appearances exist, that the one is in possession of a comfortable house, whilst the other is confined to a wretched hut, which does not afford her a chance of placing herself in competition with the former. The one has plenty of room to take in washing; has a proper place for drying and airing clothes; and can always command room enough for any work unconnected with her own domestic affairs; whilst the other is deprived of every similar advantage connected or unconnected with her own household duties. The wives of most agricultural labourers are glad to engage themselves to assist in washing, or in any other house-work for which their services may be required; and this, in numbers of instances, produces a considerable addition to the weekly income of the family; and it will, I think, be found that the char-woman is often selected from her neighbours on account of those very appearances which a good cottage is calculated to produce—such as neatness of appearance in herself and children, and other praiseworthy qualities, no less the result of more favourable external advantages.

A commodious cottage sometimes affords the mother of a large family an opportunity of keeping a small school; to another, perhaps, an opportunity of instructing a number

of children in lace-making. An essential difference will be found in the advantage the one affords over the other, in storing the produce of harvest. In the smallest cottages the gleanings of the fields must be placed by the fireside or in the bed-room; and, as soon as it can possibly be thrashed, the straw, which would otherwise be very serviceable, is sold at two-thirds its real value, because there is no place in which it can be stored.

The value of a garden, however small it may be, is not to be overlooked in this brief summary. Its connection with the house, and the almost daily addition it proves to the family table, makes it a most desirable object: yet how many miserable huts are there in villages, which cannot boast of the smallest plot, and this, very frequently, in situations where no possible hindrance exists to render such an addition not only practicable, but highly advantageous to the owner of the property. It is principally the smallest cottages that have no garden annexed, which renders the evil twofold. In a commodious cottage, where the goods can be carefully arranged, they are much better secured from damage, and will, at the expiration of a number of years, be found in very superior condition to those which, for want of room, have been heaped almost promiscuously together.

Without following this point further, it must, I think, be evident to every reflecting person, that the pecuniary advantages are entirely in favour of a commodious cottage; and the least that can be said is, that such a want of necessary accommodation as that almost everywhere apparent, cannot but tend to destroy the most industrious habits, to quench the most ardent wishes, and quell the deepest sighs that ever breathed for independence.

To attempt simply a comparison between any two classes of cottages, without entering more fully into detail, is representing the subject in its most inconclusive form.

Positive evils, those which act as known causes of known effects, and which are operating both visibly and invisibly on society, are those which most need discussion; the origin of which we can trace, but the influence of which, when developed, we cannot so fully detect; evils which may be prevented whilst in the germ of their existence, but which, if matured, defy all control.

The pecuniary losses sustained by the poor, for want of cottages better adapted to their necessities, are few and trifling, when placed in competition with other evils originating from the same source. The evils so produced may be divided into three distinct classes—the physical, the moral, and the intellectual.

Mankind have ever been more attentive to actual suffering, than active in tracing out its causes, and adopting preventive measures. Let any one look around on the almost numberless benevolent institutions which adorn this nation, and ask whether the best feelings of human nature have not been, at different times, by different classes of individuals, awakened to the highest sense of generosity and sympathy for the sufferings of their fellow men. Scarcely is there any calamity incident to humanity but has been recognised by the hand of charity, and an asylum afforded to its victims. If we go to the great Metropolis, or to almost any large town in the kingdom, and visit the various public institutions open to the reception of sufferers of all classes, we shall find the most noble efforts to have been made on behalf of misery and misfortune. Here is an asylum for the blind; further on, is one for the deaf and dumb; and here, again, one for the insane. In one place, the hand of benevolence is extended to the unfortunate good; in another, it is offered to the victim of imprudence and vice; and in whatever form misery can exist, some noble edifice has been raised, evincing the willingness of the sympathizing

to render every assistance towards its mitigation. It is, nevertheless, true, that the best meant efforts have most commonly been directed to the alleviation, rather than to the prevention, of suffering. Many a well-disposed person will subscribe handsomely towards the erection of a hospital; but the same individuals, in building cottages for the poor, will not pay the slightest attention whatever to their structure, with a view of rendering them healthy. The latter is by far of greatest importance, and might do much towards superseding the necessity of the former. How much needless suffering, and needless expense too, might be saved by making architecture subservient to its noblest purposes, namely, the health and happiness of the people. It is not in the huts of the poor alone, that architecture has lost sight of its highest object, for in the mansions of the rich, and in some of the best public buildings, no provision has been made for the health of those who occupy them. The late Houses of Parliament were instances, by not affording proper means of ventilation. These defects become more apparent, and are more destructive of health, in proportion as the fabric is limited in extent. The evil is, therefore, more prominent in the cottages of the poor, and falls on this class with twofold vengeance. It would be more praiseworthy in society to afford the poor means for the preservation of health, than it is to provide them with means for its recovery when lost. The latter is a benevolent act; but the former one of higher importance. There are two things necessary to accomplish this great end. The one is, educating the poor in the best known principles of laws for the preservation of health; and the other, the improvement of their dwellings.

Every one at all acquainted with the human frame, is aware of the necessity of a continual supply of fresh

air ; and the fatal effects of its absence are everywhere known and felt. The Creator has adapted the organs of respiration to the atmosphere which surrounds us ; and the further removed from a pure state is the air we breathe, the greater is the danger incurred of impairing the health and vigour of the body. This appears evident from the best known statements respecting the causes of disease, and the various ratios of mortality in different places and amongst different classes of persons. The laws for the preservation of health are fairly marked out by the hand of Nature, nor can they be abused with impunity. In thinly-populated districts, where the inhabitants generally are free from any particular hardships and have a pure air to breathe, a tolerable average of human life may be attained ; but go into some of the manufacturing towns—go into Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Liverpool, and take the average in the abodes of the Irish poor, where in some instances bedding for fourteen persons is spread over a space not exceeding twelve feet square. Go and take the average in London, where one-third of the human race expire in infancy ; or watch the flight of existence in almost any densely-populated town, and it is at once proved to what ends an abuse of one of the great laws of our nature will lead. I take it for granted, that wherever the all-wise Creator has instituted relations in the natural world, an acquiescence in the law, as far as man is concerned, is essential to his own existence and happiness. No closer relation in the order of nature can exist between any two separate things, than between the human lungs and the surrounding atmosphere ; and no truth is more fully demonstrated, than the necessity of recognizing and acting upon it in the strictest sense. In cities and large towns, it is well known that the lungs are prevented that free access to a pure atmosphere for which they are adapted ; a pure current of air being

obstructed by the great mass of surrounding buildings, and rendered impure by the unhealthy effluvia continually mingling with it. Hence the great mortality in towns compared with villages, evidence of which is given in the following extract from the First Annual Report, by the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, in England: "It appears that in 1831 the population of the Metropolitan Division, including Greenwich, was 1,594,890; and the population of five counties—Cornwall, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Devonshire,—was nearly the same, or 1,599,624. The total deaths in the Metropolitan Division amounted to 24,959; in the counties, to 15,210. The deaths in 24 city districts, including Manchester, Liverpool, &c., were 22,944; in seven counties with nearly the same population, the deaths amounted to only 14,473." In another part of the same report is the following: "It will be found that the mortality increases as the density of the population increases; and where the density and the affluence are the same, that the rate of mortality depends on the efficiency of the ventilation, and of the means which are employed for the removal of impurities."

It must, I think, be acknowledged, that the causes to which are ascribed the high rate of mortality in cities and manufacturing towns, exist more commonly, and act more fatally, as we descend in the scale of society, because the means of procuring ventilation lessen in the same proportion; and the same causes which increase the amount of mortality amongst the manufacturing poor, operate, although with less severity, in the cottage of the agricultural labourer. In cities and large towns the purest air is to be found in the squares and open streets; whilst in the lanes, alleys, and courts, it degenerates in proportion as the space is limited; and as the poorest classes occupy the worst description of building, the evils increase with

the declining means of the population. In villages, also, the most miserable cottages will be found tenanted by the most wretched of the inhabitants ; and, however much it may be argued that they are suitable to the mode of living adopted by a particular class of poor, it admits of much doubt whether the cultivation of superior habits does not bear a strict relation to other improvements which are entirely out of their own reach to effect.

It is a fact too well attested, and too frequently observed, to admit of doubt, that in a great majority of the cottages of the poor the health and comfort of the family are not sufficiently provided for. It may be argued, certainly, with some plausibility, that the agricultural labourer has the best possible chance of securing health from his very occupation ; and it is doubtless a freedom of access to a pure atmosphere, that extends to him a longer term of existence than is destined for the labouring mechanic in the city. But what a fearful contrast is frequently presented to him on his return home. In most poor families, and particularly in large families, a washing-day must return once at least in every fortnight ; and in the many dreary, sunless weeks of winter, there are no means of drying but by the fireside—in fact, the whole room (where but one) must be occupied for this purpose. There are few who have a fireside free from such encumbrances, who can form any idea of the misery thus occasioned, or of the fatal effects which too often attend it. The poor man, whether returning from the field or the barn, is probably, on reaching home, perspiring with the effects of his employment ; and it is certainly desirable that he should be secured from danger so great as that to which he must necessarily be exposed when completely hemmed in with wet linen evaporating around him, from the door at which he enters to the chair on which he reclines.

It will be said here, probably, that this is starting a difficulty of too slight a nature to deserve notice,—that habit is sufficient to protect the poor man from such trifling evils as these,—that he has been inured to such inconveniences from infancy, and, consequently, is not affected by them ; but such arguments, if they involve some truth, cannot be maintained without perverting the best rules by which an argument can be supported. There is doubtless, to a very great extent, an adaptation in the human constitution to accommodate itself to its own situation, and to fit itself to contend with the hardships and privations attendant on pecuniary distress ; but to whatever extent such adaptations may exist, the laws for the promotion of health are greatly on the side of a rational provision being made for their observance. The stomach may adapt itself to food of almost any quality and quantity, but there is a point at which nature retires from the contest and leaves the victim to perish. Heat and cold may be borne to a great extent, but there is a latitude on both sides which cannot be endured. The human mind may be fitted to contend with a thousand difficulties, and bear the load of many sorrows, but misfortune may at last so securely surround it, that hope yields an expiring sigh, and the struggle is over.

The majestic oak may be fitted to brave a thousand storms, and bid defiance to their fury ; but the blast may at length arise against which its strength is turned to weakness, and its adamantine roots are torn from their stubborn hold.

The greatest evil of a physical nature, in such cottages as I am describing, originates in the scantiness of the sleeping-rooms. It is a notorious fact, that in a majority of the cottages of the poor, there is but one sleeping-room, which must on an average afford accommodation for five or six, and in some instances for ten or twelve persons.

The effects of such an arrangement on the health of the family are evidently of the most destructive character. The unhealthy state of such rooms, particularly in the latter portion of the night, is doubtless known to most persons, but to those who may not be fully conscious of the magnitude of the evil, the two following extracts from "Combe's Physiology," illustrative of the nature of atmospheric air, and the supply essential to the promotion of health, may place the subject in a clearer light. "Atmospheric air consists of about 78 per cent. of nitrogen or azotic gas, 21 per cent. of oxygen, and not quite one per cent. of carbonic acid, or fixed air; and such is its constitution when taken into the lungs in the act of breathing. When it is expelled from them, however, its composition is found to be greatly altered. The quantity of nitrogen remains nearly the same, but 8 or 8½ per cent. of the oxygen, or vital air, has disappeared, and been replaced by an equal amount of carbonic acid."

"An individual is ascertained to breathe, on an average, from 14 to 20 times in a minute, and to inhale from 15 to 40 cubic inches of air at each inspiration. Even taking the consumption of air at 20 inches as a very low estimation, and rating the number of inspirations at 15, it appears that in the space of one minute no less than 300 cubic inches of air are required for the respiration of a single person. In the same space of time, 24 inches of oxygen disappear, and are replaced by an equal amount of carbonic acid: so that in the course of an hour, one pair of lungs will, at a low estimate, vitiate the air by the subtraction of no less than 1440 cubic inches of oxygen, and the addition of an equal number of carbonic acid, thus constituting a source of impurity which cannot be safely overlooked."

Did not the small sleeping-rooms of large families

receive some portion, at least, of fresh air, we might expect the same consequences to ensue as those which terminated the lives of the prisoners in the black hole of Calcutta.

Let us suppose the fact of one small bed-room containing a large family during severe illness; and what a scene of wretchedness must it then exhibit. It is, perhaps, the mother of the family who is called to drink the bitter cup of affliction, and, in all probability, the necessitous circumstances of the husband will not admit of a nurse to take charge of the invalid, or, it may be, that the domestic arrangements devolve on the daughter of ten or twelve years old. Few, I imagine, but those who have observed the situation of poor families during sickness, can picture to themselves the misery which then presents itself in very small cottages. When unusual attention both to cleanliness and ventilation should be resorted to for the sake of the sufferer, as well as the family at large, it is evident, that for want of means, both are neglected. It is not often in cases of severe illness that the medical attendant considers it prudent to admit fresh air by opening the casement of the patient's room; so that it is only in the larger cottages, where the sick chamber opens into another room or passage, that even a moderate exchange of air can take place. Leaving the afflicted mother to her fate under such circumstances as these, is not the idea of a healthy family taking their repose in the same room truly awful? Is it not awful as regards its effects on the health, and equally so as regards its effects on the happiness of the family? The chamber of the sick should be the chamber of silence, save when some helping hand administers relief; when some pious friend breathes the language of consolation; or some long-loved relative is present to soothe with conversation the sleepless hours of the sufferer. I will

not attempt to overdraw the picture by bringing into existence imaginary horrors, in order to harrow up the feelings of the humane. I will represent the evil but under one aspect more, and that in the shape of a reality ; for it is one which cannot be aided by figure, and one that is too solemn for fiction.

The afflicted mother, around whose sickly bed a numerous family have long retired to their nightly slumbers, has at length breathed her last. She is stretched a pallid corpse on that couch where she has so long reposed, and the great law of the Creator, which commands man back to his native dust, is already in execution. It is well that we should acquaint ourselves with our own frailty, that we should see poor mortality in its most touching character. It is well, too, that the children of a departed parent should view her remains ; that they should see the cold, stiff hand, which has so many thousand times administered to their wants. It is well they should gaze on those closed eyes, which have so often shed tears of sorrow, and, perhaps, tears of joy, connected with their own good or ill. It is well they should gaze on the cold lips, which, in the warmth of a mother's love, have so often been pressed to theirs. It is well they should thus take an affectionate and final farewell, for the remembrance of that scene may serve to quicken and keep alive many a noble sentiment connected with their future moral existence. But is it well that the chamber of death should be also that of repose, that the sleepers there should inhale corruption itself ? A sense of propriety may generally lead a poor family, under these circumstances, to make choice of extreme privations and inconveniences, in preference to mingling their sleeping breath with the nauseous effluvia arising from a kindred corpse in a state of decomposition ; but in these miserable huts, there are many instances in which the living and

the dead are found mixed together in the same dreary apartment.

Besides the direct physical evils resulting to the poor themselves from the want of sufficient room, not a few public calamities have been traced to the same source. Contagious diseases most commonly originate amongst the most wretched of the poor, in lanes and alleys where there is an accumulation of filth, and the buildings are so small and confined as not to admit a free current of air. The destroyer does not, however, stay here; he stalks on from house to house, till he enters the dwellings of the rich, as though to reprove them for their neglect of others.

To trace out the direct cause of the various evils which in a thousand different ways develop themselves in society, would indeed be traversing bounds far beyond the precinct of mortal ken. But so closely related do we find cause and effect existing, and that on terms of such unbroken intimacy, that we cannot fairly mistake from whence the latter derives its existence, and from what source it is nourished.

So close is the connection between the causes of physical and moral evil, that it would be difficult, in many instances, to ascribe one of them to a source from whence the other did not proceed. Sometimes a physical evil produces a moral one, and sometimes a moral evil engenders a physical one. They may exist separately, but the one is rarely independent of the other. On the principle of their mutual co-operation it might be shown, not only that they have a dependence on each other, but that they originate together, that they progress together, and attain maturity together.

Society may move but slowly forward, or it may eventually take more rapid strides in the path of refinement; but whether it may slumber in its infant cradle,

or rise rapidly to its destined glory, all the great principles of social and domestic improvement must move on together. In removing the great sources of physical evil existing amongst the lower portions of society, more would be done towards improving their moral and religious welfare than can be effected by keeping in sight the latter objects only. Mankind, in their efforts to promote the well-being of society, have erred in not recognizing this important principle; and when they have found the best-directed efforts fail to produce the salutary effects expected, it has been ascribed to anything besides its real cause. Any attempt, morally and intellectually, to elevate the poor, can only be fully effected by making equal provision for their domestic comforts; so, on the other hand, the physical evils which afflict them will only be permanently removed as the other springs of improvement are opened. This argument does not, however, involve the impropriety of attempting the alleviation of any individual evil, or of aiming to effect any individual good. In one house, where the income is very limited, superior skill in exercising domestic economy may save much want and suffering; but beyond the bare escape from starvation, nothing further is left, nor can the moral and intellectual faculties expand. Another family may be in receipt of an income sufficient to prevent needless physical suffering; but so defective is the discipline of its members, that it fails in preventing the worst of evils. In a third, perhaps, the intellectual faculties preponderate; but the physical and moral disabilities are such, that the mind is incapacitated for mental exercise, and thought; soon tired, shrinks from the hopeless task of acquiring increasing strength.

To attempt the growth of any particular good where it is impracticable to unite all in the same effort, is obvi-

ously right also, because it is lessening the difficulties which would intercept the attainment of every other ; but the sources from which originate the greatest complication of evils, are those which mankind should be most zealous in their exertions to destroy.

I have represented the general imperfection of cottages of the poor as a frequent cause of pecuniary want and privation, and a powerful promoter of physical suffering ; and I consider these imperfections no less detrimental to their moral improvement. Where is it that we look for the perpetrator of dark deeds—for the robber and assassin ? Surely not in the romantic cottage, where the poor man has room to store the produce of a good garden. Surely it is not here—for at every interval of leisure, he resorts to this valued plot of earth, to tend his own crops, or to decorate with shrubs and flowers the borders that encircle his home. Surely it is not here—for he has a source of enjoyment, which wins his mind from vicious pursuits, and betrays it into a love of nobler and higher objects. It furnishes him with the means of profitably and agreeably filling up those hours which otherwise might be devoid of any good purpose. It procures him the means of innocent recreation, and affords him, what every one ought to possess, an object which may always be pursued with profit.

For a family to be destitute of a garden, is, to no inconsiderable extent, to be destitute of the means of moral improvement. Who is there possessing a garden, however small it may be, but loves to pace its narrow walks, and watch the wonders of nature as the changing seasons develop themselves in the budding leaves of spring, in the blushing flowers of summer, or in the golden fruits of autumn ? Who is there, however indifferent an observer he may be of the Almighty Power which is ever working around him, but is sometimes

won to an admiration of what he beholds, and feels within his bosom a sentiment of gratitude ascending to his Maker? Every one who watches over the changes of his own moral feelings can also testify to the hallowing influence of natural objects, in suppressing the unquiet of a disturbed mind. Whether it may be unhinged by having yielded to angry feeling; whether soured by trifles, or rendered painful by misfortune; whatever, indeed, may have operated in agitating it, there is an almost unfailing adaptation, in the effects produced by the sight of a garden or field, to produce quiet and composure. The gentle breeze just waking silence amongst the trees, and moving to playful motion the leaves and flowers, the varied songs of a thousand voices issuing from hill and dale, and innumerable other sources of rural delight, are in their nature so foreign to angry and bitter feeling, and form such a contrast to whatever ruffles and disturbs the mind, that their presence almost invariably acts as a restorative.

I cannot forbear here referring to a topic which has recently occupied no inconsiderable share of public attention. It may indeed appear foreign to my present object; but the inquirer after causes is very commonly, and indeed necessarily, led to deviate from the most prominent features of his research, to introduce themes apparently unconnected with the general purposes of his investigations. I allude to the observance of the Sabbath, a neglect of which is supposed latterly to have been unusually prevalent. As far as this charge relates to the poor, the foregoing subject bears a strict relation to it; and I maintain that the want of a garden very commonly leads to what is termed Sabbathbreaking. This may appear both strange and startling,—it may appear to want the support of common-sense, or originating in a confusedness of intellect; but a

little inquiry will divest the assumption of all claim to vagary.

Any one who will give himself the trouble to walk round a village on a Sunday morning, extending his visits to those parts of it where the cottages are clustered together and have no gardens, may, from his own immediate observation, prove the point in question. He will probably find some half-dozen or more persons assembled, lounging against the walls of the houses, or, what is more probable, if there happened to be one on the spot, leaning on the wall or railing of the pig-sty.

Another evil originating from the want of a garden, and taking place at the same time, is the practice of poor people going to a distant field to procure their vegetables.

Here is one returning with a fork and basket of potatoes slung across his shoulder, and another with a huge basket of cabbage in his hand, just as the bells announce the time of Divine service. There can be no doubt but that the want of a garden attached to many of the cottages of the poor, thus driving them from home, or bringing them together in the manner I have described, is the means of preventing thousands from attendance on public worship.

Besides the hours occupied on Sundays in attendance at public places of worship, and allowing that a family may devote another portion of their time to reading, there will remain many vacant hours in which something must be done or thought of, and the first thing that presents itself is a walk. I can see no reason why people should not enjoy a walk on Sundays. It is, to say the least of it, a most innocent method of passing away that portion of time which otherwise might hang heavily on hand, and make the individual a burden to himself; but those who do not approve of Sunday walks would do well to bear in

mind that thousands who are destitute of a garden, to which they might occasionally resort, must either be pent up the whole of the day in-doors (a most disagreeable task in fine weather), or exchange their confinement for the streets or fields. The fields are, doubtless, most frequented on Sunday by those who have no garden where to enjoy a private walk. To such, it is a more delightful recreation, because the sensations of pleasure it produces are only occasional. There are, however, greater abuses of the Sabbath occasioned by the want of a garden, than originate in walking the fields; for, as I have before observed, the enjoyments arising from a contemplation of natural objects are of the most ennobling character, because they lead the mind up to the great Creator of all; and he who beholds in the written word a manifestation of the Deity, will surely not fail to recognize it in the vast volume of nature.

That class of poor occupying cottages which have no outlet, nor means of ingress and egress but by the door opening into the street, are from this circumstance alone subjected to many disadvantages of a moral character. In mild weather these huts are not endurable unless the door is gaping wide open, which is actually the case six months at least out of the twelve. By this means a direct communication takes place between the inmates, and whatever transpires around them. Either this exposed situation must constitute an evil, or domestic privacy must cease to be a good. It constitutes an evil when it engenders that most mischievous practice of carrying the history of each other's faults from house to house; when the witness of his neighbour's actions takes away the news of some petty quarrel between husband and wife, or between brother and sister; when each one betrays and magnifies the little disturbances which occur around him. It constitutes an evil when it causes one to malign the character

of another, and perpetuates the recollection of hasty words exchanged by relatives or friends; because those very foibles, but for the publicity given them, might soon be forgiven and forgotten. It is rather the duty of an individual to conceal the faults of those with whom he lives, than to expose them to every person with whom he meets, for the latter is almost sure to increase the evil. When the failings of individuals, or of families, are made known to the public, it frequently puts into the hands of an enemy a weapon of retaliation, which few know well how to wield.

The tendency of a too-direct and a too-frequent communication amongst poor families is pregnant with many other evils. No truth is more fully admitted, and surely none more fully demonstrated, than that both virtue and vice are to a great extent the result of example. If the former is expected to exhibit a prominent feature in the character of the poor, and, more particularly, if it be expected to grow up amongst the children of the poor, they must be protected from the every-day example of opposing practices and principles. Their tender years must be nursed, and their riper years instructed, in that domestic privacy, where, if vice must sometimes meet the eye, and the oath of profanity must sometimes meet the ear, the eye of parental care, and the voice of parental guidance, may nevertheless be influenced over them, till habits of moral discipline at home have fitted them to contend with iniquity abroad. In order for poor parents to maintain that watchfulness over the morals of their children, which is so essential to their future well-being, I contend for the necessity of a yard or garden, in which they may occasionally dispose of them without turning them into the streets, where they are much more likely to corrupt than improve each other. It is not to be expected that early habits of virtue and piety will be commonly

found to exist under such an exposure to counteracting influences.

No trifling step toward superior moral discipline in any house, whether that of the master or servant, is order—domestic order. It is almost impossible clearly to associate any idea of order and regularity with a cottage of very limited dimensions, a certain portion of space being essential to its very existence. For order to exist in a cottage, there must be room for every article in necessary use to be methodically arranged; and when this is done, there shall be room left for the several members of a family to sit down comfortably by the fireside for the purposes of social intercourse. If it is argued that propriety of moral conduct may exist without the aid of these and similar advantages, I can only add, that if in some instances this may occur, yet as an almost necessary consequence, the general standard of morals will never be raised but in proportion as the physical and domestic comforts of the poor increase.

For a family to be truly good and happy, there must exist, to some extent, a love of home. It is only in proportion to the sources of enjoyment there presented to the mind that this sentiment is produced. It is the great curse of society—it is the stumbling-block to almost every improvement—that a love of home does not take the place of opposite desires. It is the great enemy of all social and domestic comfort, of all moral improvement, and of all intellectual progress. It is the curse of the rich and of the poor, of the prince and of the peasant. If there exists no love of home, there exists but little chance of enjoyment at all. I do not say that the home of every person may, from his own efforts, become a happy one, or that he may not justly seize every opportunity of spending his time elsewhere; but even where the

latter alternative is practised, in many instances a well-directed effort to procure peace and enjoyment at home would be attended with success. By a love of home, I would be understood to imply a love of domestic peace and quiet ; a love of kindred ; a love of friends ; a nursing of the social affections ; a love of all the little delights and recreations a well-regulated and well-disciplined home is calculated to produce.

The poor man toiling from morning till night, from week to week, from year to year—toiling even from the cradle to the tomb—what has he to cheer him, what has he to hope for, to live for, unless domestic comfort meet him at the threshold of his cottage ? The blessings that surround his hearth are his all ; and if he has none there, he has none elsewhere. What is the wide world to him ?—what to him its vast kingdoms and empires ?—what the revolutions that exalt one nation and lay another in the dust ? What to him is the pomp of nobles ?—the might of princes ?—what to him the honoured living ?—what the remembrance of the mighty dead ? Earth and sky to him are little compared with the blessings of his home. If these are his, he is still happy, he is still great. The gentle winds that are wafted around him may be rich with music ; the dewy flowers that deck his morning path may breathe delicious odours ; the twinkling star in the blue expanse of heaven, that aids the fading twilight, may, to him, as he returns from his toil, possess a charm and loveliness unfelt by the more honoured amongst the sons of men. A pure love of life ; a pure relish for its innocent enjoyments ; a love of all that is good ; a respect for all that is great ; a veneration for all that is sacred ; a consciousness of bliss here, and the hope of heaven hereafter, may still, despite fortune, be the possession of the poor man, if he has a happy, a loved, and a cherished home.

It is not too much to suppose, that where a habit of

drinking is practised by poor persons, it has most commonly originated in the want of domestic comfort. Why does the husband, after a day of toil, leave his wife, his children, and his home, to spend his evenings at the beer-house? Is it only that he may quaff the intoxicating beverage, and feel the effects of an elated spirit? Surely this is not all. There is something in the place itself he prefers to his own hearth. It may be there is a more comfortable fireside. It may be there is society he prefers. He may be tempted to make the exchange from a variety of motives; but nothing is needed to frustrate and counteract desires so opposed to domestic enjoyment, save a love of that home which is so much shunned. In order to promote this desirable feeling, one essential requisite is a cottage, suitable and corresponding to the objects sought to be attained.

Besides the moral debasement of one class of poor, and the moral elevation of another class—distinctions which may generally be traced to their varying physical conditions—the intellectual inferiority of one to the other will be found as much dependent on the same causes. We connect an idea of vice and misery with the crowded and contracted courts and alleys of cities, and with the dirty lanes and yards of towns and villages, as though they necessarily included the existence of the vices that grow up within them; and it is to the same extent that we conceive these wretched places to be the abodes of the grossest ignorance. However great may be the advantages of an extensive knowledge of the world, in order to attain just views of mankind, human character is never more clearly developed, nor its realities more plainly taught, than when we read it at home in its simplest garb. We see, in the poor man, intellectual capabilities, developed in a variety of forms, and, like his moral powers, almost invariably corresponding to his

physical condition; and we see in this connection the necessity of applying a remedy to his domestic wants, in order to produce improvement in the higher faculties.

The tendency of cottages unsuited to the physical necessities of the poor, is to cramp the energies of the mind by realizing to it the impossibility of taking a first step in the path of improvement. He who is placed where he cannot possibly emerge from a state of wretchedness, soon realizes a habit of compliance with his condition, and a recklessness ensues respecting everything unconnected with the mere gratification of his animal wants. As far as external comfort takes a part in forming the intellectual character of the individual, so far does the appropriateness of his habitation to the attainments of domestic comfort form a part also.

In large towns it is certain that many objects stand in the way of effecting those improvements in the houses of the poor, which are so necessary and desirable. In small towns, however, it is not excusable to erect cottages of an inferior class; and in villages it is still less so, because the value of land is comparatively trifling; and still more inexcusable is it here, not to add a good garden. Thousands of instances might be pointed out, where the cottages of the poor are limited to the smallest plot of ground, and at the same time encircled with land let at 40s. or 50s. per acre. One rood of this land which actually pays the owner but 10s. or 12s. yearly, added to the cottages, the property of the same owner, would increase their annual value at least forty shillings, and would even at this extra rent be highly advantageous to the tenants. Garden ground is always treble, or more than treble, the value of land used for agricultural purposes. When, therefore, cottages are hemmed in with a few solitary yards of ground, and no real necessity is found to exist for such an arrangement, it is scarcely too

much to say, that the owners of such property are at least wanting in thoughtfulness, if not in common feelings of humanity.

Another groundless subterfuge for withholding gardens from the poor, is the supposed danger of making them too independent. There is, however, but one way of preventing the increase of pauperism, and that is by placing the self-supporting poor at a greater distance from it. The less in proportion will be the danger of any sinking down to it, and the greater will be the efforts used to avoid it. He who wishes for a subservient race of poor, wishes for a race of paupers. He who exerts himself to establish amongst them a spirit of independence, gives to pauperism a most destructive blow. It was the great curse of the old poor-law system that all fared alike, the well as the ill-deserving; and as so little real distinction existed between two really distinct classes, it became a matter of no moment with the many on which side they enlisted; whether, in fact, they lived by their own labour or by that of others.

Building, it is well known, is like most other pursuits, one in which pecuniary gain forms the great object; and, where it is conducted on principles calculated to promote the good of society, is deserving a suitable recompense. But when we see the sordid hand of avarice erecting habitations for human beings, without making any provision for their common comforts; when nothing is looked forward to but a weekly pittance wrung from the scanty earnings of the most haggard, wretched, and sickly of mortal beings; when we see the grasping hand of wealth raising up fit abodes for disease, for vice, and for ignorance to dwell in; when we see it filling up every corner of our streets, and encircling society on all hands with these pestilential holds; we see that hand erecting the monuments of a nation's disgrace, the monuments of its moral debasement, and

forming a barricade to check the advance of modern civilization.

Picture the possessor of immense wealth surveying with keen eye every obscure and vacant corner of his estate. Anxious to know that every portion of it is a source of profit, he neglects not its most minute parts. One untenanted spot had struck his attention as unproductive of any remuneration. This was almost an enclosed space, being bounded on the south side by a range of lofty buildings, and on the north and east sides by low miserable cottages. About a third part of the enclosed ground, that nearest the tenements, had been occupied as gardens; but as the rays of the sun rarely visited this dreary place, these scanty morsels of earth were neither a source of profit nor of pleasure to the cottager. The remainder of the square was occupied with heaps of stone and every description of unsightly rubbish, which required a retreat from the public gaze. Here and there might be seen tufts of the coarsest grass, but scarcely a flower of any description graced the scene; even the rank leaves of the hemlock were gray with age before their appointed autumn. The domestic tribes forebore to visit so sad a scene, and the only natural sound that issued within its precincts was the hoarse croaking of the toad from the putrid water of a pool, which stagnated in the centre. Some further profit must, however, be realized by this vacant space. For agricultural purposes it was unfit, and so excluded was it from the sun that, with the best management, it would scarcely produce the most common vegetables. Only one method, therefore, presented itself of turning it to any profitable account, which was, to erect another range of cottages on the western side. This was effected, and that no injury might be sustained by any of the surrounding property, the whole of the windows were placed

inside the square, and a low narrow brick arch formed the only mode of access to these encircled walls.

Yes! although the light of heaven is excluded from this loathsome spot, here the child must receive its earliest impressions of natural objects. Here, the eye, formed to behold the gorgeous beauties of creation, must feast its gaze on a few miserable plants, whose leaves are withered and diseased. Here, the ear, formed to revel in the pure harmony of nature, must list to all that is discordant in utterance, to all that is unholy in effect. Here, too, the infant lungs, formed to inhale the source of life from the pure fountain of heaven, must imbibe a putrid atmosphere, beneath whose withering influence, tree, shrub, and flower, sicken and drop to an early tomb. Yet here do men and Christians create abodes for human beings; and then wonder, alas! that the world does not produce a more healthful, a wiser, and a better race of beings. Enter that narrow brick arch, and you will see wantonness stalking at noonday; you will see indolence reclining in view; and, perchance, it is to this dark hiding-place that the famished incendiary retires from the midnight glare of the burning village.

We look back with feelings of horror on the cruelties of bygone ages. We pity the sentiments which could congregate a vast concourse of people to witness the horrid practice of bull-baiting. We recoil at the recollection of the Roman Amphitheatre, where man opposed to man rushed voluntarily into the arms of death, or where the criminal was loosed, to be crushed in the gory jaws of the lion; but little do we contemplate the vices and miseries engendered and nursed in these modern Amphitheatres which are still erected throughout the length and breadth of the land. But where shall we look for help from the perpetuation of so

monstrous an evil ? Is it not an appropriate subject for legislative interference ? If not, then is not the public safety—then is not the public health—then is not the morality, the education, the elevation—then, in fine, is not the welfare of the community a subject for the consideration of those who govern ? There is, however, if such an effort be impracticable, another step which may be taken. The public indignation ought to be aroused. There are many public acts which enkindle the wrath of the multitude, and a universal expression of disapprobation ensues. Public opinion acts as a mighty barrier against encroachments and innovations, in a thousand shapes, and is becoming mighty in stemming the tide of despotism. Against such glaring evils let the press deal out its most deadly blows ; let every well-wisher to his species utter against it his loudest cries of indignation, till at least a moral shame, if no better principle, seize the aggressor.

SOCIETY.

BY Society is most commonly meant, or understood, the whole body of people of which a nation or community is composed. It is a term levelling all distinction, and, at the same time, including every rank and class of persons, from royalty itself to the lowest grade of pauperism. We are accustomed to speak of society as we do of individuals; attaching to it the same dispositions, the same qualities, and the same motives, as would, with equal propriety, be applicable to persons. We speak of its physical, its moral, and its intellectual condition; of its diseases and corruptions; of its virtues and vices; of its knowledge and ignorance: and no personification can be more aptly or justly applied. We speak of a good being conferred on, or an evil being engendered in society; but so wide-spreading is the influence of either the one or the other, that we cannot speak of its influence upon any distinct class with the same propriety as we can of a good or evil being in operation in society at large.

Each individual member of society is a part of the whole. Every thought and action which is brought into existence, becomes as much a part of the moral and intellectual world as does each separate particle of matter form a part of the natural world.

There is no propensity of either a virtuous or a vicious character, which acts powerfully on one separate portion of the great mass, but betrays its existence in an opposite direction, however different may be the garb it

assumes under the several aspects. This constitutes the propriety of connecting with the influence of active principles the common idea, that it is society at large, and not particular classes of society, that is acted upon by the principle in operation. The generality of murders are committed by the lower classes ; but we cannot say that royal hands have never been imbued with the blood of a fellow-creature. Positive acts of theft are most common amongst the poor and indigent ; but the same propensity is still active as we ascend in the scale of respectability, only assuming a different character, and becoming less characterised as such, because stratagem and artifice are less cognizable by the civil law than a clear and flagrant robbery. The wealthy defendant who escapes from the hands of the plaintiff is often as strictly a thief as the felon who stands condemned as such before a different tribunal. It is the positive wrong one man knowingly inflicts upon another must constitute his criminality.

So powerfully does the moral condition of one class operate upon another, that the vices distinguishing the one may generally be traced, either directly or indirectly, to the other. Do we find, amongst the rude and illiterate, some who can ridicule Christianity and profane the name of its divine founder ? So could the learned and accomplished Voltaire. Do we find in others a base subservience to all who will promote their pecuniary interests ? This was a trait in the character of Talleyrand, at once the friend and minister of Napoleon ; at once the friend and minister of Napoleon's enemies. When the Roman empire first betrayed symptoms of decay, does history furnish proof of the growing licentiousness and bloodthirstiness of the soldiery ? It furnishes proof also of the vices that were daily strengthening in the palace of its Emperors. It was here that a conspiracy against the life of Commodus was formed by his own sister. It was here

that he, in his turn, laid plans of the most diabolical revenge; and it was here that the fatal draught was at length administered to him by the hand of one of his faithless but favourite prostitutes. Caracalla, another Emperor, who reigned shortly after, attempted to raise the swords of his soldiers against the life of an aged father, and even in the presence of his mother, and when in the act of tendering the hand of friendship towards his brother Geta, did he command him to be murdered in cold blood.

The history of mankind, the history of nations, and the laws of the human mind, all tend to show, that whatever adds to the demoralization of one class of persons, or is favourable to an opposite impression, has a tendency to pervade that region of society even the most distant from it; so closely are the interests and the happiness of one human being bound up with another. There is an influence exerted by the several classes of society on each other, a relation so close and of such vast extent, that the physical, moral, and intellectual condition of the one can no more cease to act on the other, than the elementary harmonies subsisting amongst the several productions of nature can cease to bear an affinity. The present state of society, although one of great improvement, still leads to the conclusion that the several relations of the several orders composing it have not been fully recognized. Did the possessor of immense wealth perceive the fatal influence that is exerted on his own moral character, on his hopes, and on his happiness, by the vices, the ignorance, and the suffering, existing amongst the poor—could he, when some deep-rooted contagion is desolating his own family and destroying the comforts of his hearth, trace its origin to some pale, haggard, and restless being, who had stolen, step by step, unseen, from some pestilential hold of misery and iniquity,

till he had reached the interior of his mansion; could he trace evils, apparently too distant to affect his domestic peace, winding their intricate and mazy way through every defile and avenue of society, till they had gained access to his own dwelling, surely he would be anxious to uproot them at once and stay their restless course.

There is at all times existing in society a standard of moral influence, which changes its position according to the varying nature of a variety of circumstances. It is to this central point that the common feeling tends, possessing a centripetal force which acts with equal attraction on both extremes. It may fairly become a question in moral philosophy, whether the vices of the rich act most injuriously on the poor, or those of the latter on the rich. The physical and moral condition of the lower classes is exerting a baneful influence on every other department of society, whilst the intellectual advantages of the higher classes, as far as they have descended, have been modifying the effects arising from the former. But take whatever possible view we may of the subject, it is impossible to separate the moral advantages or disadvantages of any one from every other portion of the community.

In the descending scale, the manners and customs of every rank are imitated at least, if not successfully so, by that class next it in station. The Court dictates to itself the fashions it shall adopt, and prescribes customs for its own observance. But no sooner is the new fashion or ceremony adopted here, than it is seized by the nobility, and becomes familiar in their own circles. It does not, however, stay here: a third class, jealous of royal patronage and lordly grandeur, claim for themselves the same honours; and still downward is the imitation attempted, till the new garb assumes a tawdry appear-

ance, and impossibility at length prevents any further display of regal splendour. In much higher and more important matters will the same tendency be discovered, in scanning the mysterious movements of society. Every class partakes most essentially of the same sentiments, feelings, and objects of pursuit, as that above or below it. Admitting this, we are led to a conclusion by no means unfavourable to the final elevation of all classes of society, which is—that a mutual dependence exists amongst all for the improvement of all.

In every community there exist two great springs of action, which must either be extending or diminishing their own powers. These are—the influence of intellect and moral feeling. Unfortunately, the great mass of people exert in much the greater proportion a moral influence, which being determined in a considerable degree by their physical condition, is consequently of an unfavourable character. I take it for granted, and think all must admit, that no mind can act on itself only. It must then exert an influence on some other mind, and the mind that receives must again reflect an impression ; and so on in almost endless progression.

Intellectual influence takes generally a descendent course, whilst moral influence operates more powerfully in the opposite direction. It is true that a considerable proportion of individuals, remarkable for their talents, have originally occupied but a low place in the scale of society. Of these may be named Shakspeare, Johnson, Burns, Chatterton, and many others ; but it is the influence of great minds like these, rather than their origin, that forms an alliance to the present subject. Whatever means may be looked forward to as those destined to renovate and elevate society, I think it evident that it must be effected by the action of superior on inferior minds ; not by the intellectual only, but by the moral influence of those

minds. The higher and, more particularly, the middle classes of the community are beginning to feel, and to feel powerfully, for the sufferings of the labouring classes ; and it is from the growth of this sympathy, to a great extent, that their deliverance from injustice and oppression will ultimately originate.

From rare instances of genius and learning have generally been traced the origin of all national improvements, whether in art, science, or commerce. The hero of Trafalgar signalized himself as a master of the mighty deep ; and Britannia has since reigned supreme in the world of waters. Johnson, as the giant of letters, moulded anew his native language, giving it a copiousness, a power, and extent of utterance, never before known ; and the literature of the nation immediately assumed a more chaste, polished, and commanding appearance. Nollekins, Flaxman, and other sculptors contemporary with them, gave a new dignity and beauty of expression to their busts and statues ; and whilst they ornament our country, and serve to awaken remembrances of the great who have passed away, no less serve as models of imitation for all future competitors in the same field of art. Lardner and Paley erected an impregnable bulwark to shield the Christian religion ; and men have since become mighty in its defence. Byron and Scott arose like two new stars in the mental universe, undimmed by all other luminaries. Their writings have won their way into thousands of hearts, chastening the taste and giving fire to the imagination of all who delight in the beautiful. They have created a new world of thought, and exist as a standard to this and to future ages, of the noblest achievements in modern literature.

As soon as a highly-talented and original character has made its appearance on the stage of human existence, the essence of the new mind becomes embodied in the public

taste and feeling ; and although gradually checked in its progress downward, still a faint glimmering from the far-seen beacon sheds its ray into the solitary cottage of the poor. If the waltzes of Weber have cheered the mansions of the great, their far-heard voice has reached the solitary hamlet, and soothed the weary moments of many a care-worn peasant.

Although society is indebted, for most of its refinements and improvements, to those mighty spirits which now and then glide across the stage of human existence, its general condition is not dependent on their immediate influence. Great minds lay the foundation for great results ; but a thousand circumstances may, and do transpire, which co-operate to impede the effects they would otherwise produce. The extent of their influence is determined by the general condition of the community. If a great moral energy is put in motion, it will move on till it is intercepted by a counteracting agency, forming the opposite equivalent. In proportion to the power of that moral energy, so in proportion must be the power of the opposing vice necessary to prevent its further extension. If a new intellectual energy is presented to the mind, it will win its way in the same proportion, but cannot proceed beyond that point prepared by the national mind for its reception ; it may, however, like a moral power, raise the common standard to a higher elevation. The extent of all influences, whatever their character may be, is fixed by the central position of the principle on which they operate.

Great minds sometimes form conceptions so superior to, and so far removed from, all ordinary existing ideas of things, and possess sympathies so far removed from all other forms of kindred feeling, as not to have a bearing on the public mind till a more refined state of feeling calls them into existence. A mind burning with an un-

conquerable love of liberty may exist in an age of darkness and despotism ; but its spirit, if once lost, will appear again on some brighter era of the world's history, and, like the orb of day, having set in clouds, will be the more welcomed on its rising. All highly-gifted characters are not equally adapted to act directly on the public mind. If, however, any great mind ever appeared exactly at that era of time when surrounding circumstances favoured its immediate development, and produced immediately its natural results, that mind is Channing's. After the immortal Washington had obtained the independence of his country ; after having, with a small band of half-clad, half-fed men, successfully contended against a powerful invader, and at length achieved a mighty victory ; Channing came to complete, to ratify, and to seal what had been so well acquired.

He has defined the true spirit of liberty ; he has added to it a new zest ; and endowed it with the means of self-preservation. He has added to it a new power ; has aided it by a pure morality ; has endowed it with a religious energy. He has recognized it in a new sense, not only as a resisting power against aggression, but as a principle productive of the most lasting peace. He has given it a new mode of existence ; has influenced it by new motives ; has discovered in it new ends ; has acquired for it a true and lasting glory. From Channing has gone forth a soul-stirring, a nation-stirring voice. Whilst his language is distinguished by the loftiest and purest eloquence ; whilst it is adapted to the finest ear ; whilst it speaks with irresistible force to the mightiest intellect ; it descends to the meanest capacity. Whilst his subjects possess new resources for the learned ; whilst they instruct at the same time the philosopher, the politician, and the divine ; they convey in the most clear and simple manner instruction to the poor and

illiterate, and refine the common understanding. Unlike most great literary productions, the works of Channing require no interpreter in order to convey their meaning to the uneducated. It is not so necessary, as with most other writings, that the ideas should first become embodied in the minds of the educated classes, and continue to descend through a variety of channels in order to reach the terminus of their exertions.

The relation subsisting between the most intellectual and the ordinary class of minds is by no means trifling in amount. Every observer may perceive, amongst the uninstructed, a desire for intellectual attainments. The boy who readily leaves his play, to practise, hour after hour, a few half-learned airs on the fife or flute, is certainly capable of improvement in the science of music. Another who is found during his leisure hours, with his slate and pencil, drawing birds and animals, or sketching profiles, is equally capable of being taught the art of painting. Another who attempts to chisel the rough stone into a human figure, might be found to possess the industry and ingenuity of a Flaxman. In the untaught lovers of art and science, there is a capacity to recognize what is superior from mere mediocrity: and the power to recognize it, proves the capability of progressing towards it. The unskilful musician can generally distinguish between a good and bad performance; and the rude painter between a mere daub and a great masterpiece. This capacity of recognizing superiority is by no means rare amongst the poor. On occasions of public addresses, when is it that we hear from the listening crowd the loud burst of applause, and see the thrill of rapture animating every countenance? Not always when the language conveys ideas best suited to the sentiments of the many, but as frequently when a number of happy sentences succeed each other, and are

terminated by a powerful climax. Is not the illiterate mind roused to a more than ordinary feeling of devotion, and to a more ardent love of truth, when the principles of Christianity are propounded, when its truths are exemplified, and its precepts enforced, from the lips of some superior teacher? Surely, then, if religious truth needs the power of oratory to win its way; if, accompanied as it is by an internal evidence, it becomes so much more apparent, and acts so much more efficaciously, when accompanied by the persuasive tongue of eloquence; there is reason to suppose that the mind, thus opened to the more refined impressions, is dependent for the progress it makes in every other department of knowledge on the attainments of those from whom it is imbibed.

As individuals of very limited discernment possess a capability of recognizing superior attainments, and of subjecting themselves to the influence of those attainments when presented to their minds, it scarcely deserves the inquiry, whether or not a possibility exists of elevating to a higher standard of intelligence the great mass of the people. It is, indeed, time to explode for ever the hateful doctrine, that there is a necessity arising out of the nature of the constitution of society for the perpetuity of so much poverty, ignorance, and abject wretchedness, as we find in existence. Admitting that any evils may be productive of good so long as they exist; admitting the natural tendency of those evils to be the annihilation of their own influence; and that in supplanting themselves, they assist ultimately in the production of opposite principles; admitting that the evils of society are made of destructible materials, and that their decay, and not their support, is essential to the general welfare, and I will add my faith to the utility of their existence; but I will not argue on the principle, that it is necessary to make so many slaves, in order that one man may be free; or,

that so many must be wretched, in order that one may be happy ; or, that so many must live the unpitied dupes of ignorance, that a few may be put in the possession of knowledge ; that we must have war on the one hand, to preserve peace on the other ; that the tempest must rage in one place, to produce a calm in another. This is not the ultimate tendency of the human mind.

As those means from which the most rapid improvement of the public mind might be expected to take place are not likely, to any great extent, to become practicable,—I mean, the elevating and attractive influence of the higher class of minds being brought more generally into contact with the great body of the people,—education must rest its mighty claims on a less effective, although a sure and steady principle of progression—that of each portion of society, from the most intelligent, as it continues to improve itself, communicating perpetually through a series of gradatory movements, still higher views, and implanting still purer motives in the descending scale of being, till a nearer intellectual approach and a closer moral relationship takes universal place.

It is very commonly observed, that the manufacturing poor and others living in towns are much better informed than the agricultural poor. This distinction does not appear to rise solely from the difference in their physical condition, although, wherever such differences exist, corresponding differences become equally apparent. I am supposing two classes, possessing, in this respect, similar advantages. The intellectual superiority of one to the other is frequently ascribed to the more favourable opportunities the one possess of communicating with each other ; but this will not satisfactorily account for it. The agricultural poor have, indeed, equal opportunities afforded them of interchanging their own thoughts and feelings ; and a rural life is certainly not unfavourable to mental

discipline. The most rational solution of the question seems to be, that in manufacturing and other towns there is, if not a direct, at least an indirect transfer of thought taking place, through the medium of a series of classes closely connected with each other, conveying, by an almost imperceptible process, the sentiments and feelings of the best-informed members of the community, to those possessing the fewest advantages; and however much the method of conveyance may disfigure the original impression, a slight trace of the resemblance is still carried down, although perhaps nearly obliterated. Admitting that the superior order of thought, from which the influence emanated, becomes lost in the distance, some of the modifications it has undergone, however inferior, are still communicated. In villages, where the poor are mostly dependent on agricultural employment, there are, generally speaking, but two classes—the rich and the poor; and the distance between them is too great, in the absence of any intermediate corresponding classes, to admit of any successful medium through which to convey any considerable portion of intelligence from one to the other. The poor cannot, consequently, greatly assist each other in the acquirement of knowledge; whilst that more active agent, moral influence, unaided on the one hand, and unchecked on the other, is left to operate alone. In proof of the above position, I beg to refer the inquirer to the different degrees of intelligence to be found in villages contiguous to towns, when contrasted with those situate at the furthest point from them. I believe it will be found that almost in the same proportion as we recede from the towns, will be found a marked decrease in the amount of general information.

Allowing that the poor mostly imbibe their ideas of the nature of things from occasional intercourse with a class removed but a little above them in the scale of intellec-

tuality, still it follows that the knowledge thus received has been acquired in a similar manner, and may be traced upward, step by step, to the educated classes. The great object of every class in society should therefore be self-improvement; not from motives of self-enjoyment only, but from a desire to exert an elevating influence on those minds which fall beneath their own, by raising which they proportionately raise every other beneath that on which they more directly act. Each class should mingle more largely with that immediately above and immediately below it, in order to acquire information on the one hand, and to communicate it on the other; and if there is at length a large portion of society found remaining who have none beneath them, to whom they can unfold their own rude ideas, these may have the satisfaction to know that they, at least, possess the mightier influence of moral feeling. This, no condition in society can stay; there is no direction in which it cannot move; no path so intricate but it can find; none so dangerous but it will dare.

Moral influence allows no impediment to intercept its mighty course, but rushes on like the wild mountain torrent, bounding its heedless way through brake and fen, venturing often, with unwelcome step, into the quiet vale, unsparing even the lily blossoms of spring, from whose blushing cheeks it blots the traces of virgin beauty, and leaves, as it retires, the unhallowed marks of its desecration.

It is difficult, in taking a general survey of society, or in watching more narrowly the intricate machinery which governs and directs its wonderful and diversified movements, to select and point out, with a properly-defined accuracy, the exact causes to which, under all circumstances, are to be attributed many of the phenomena connected with its general aspects; but I hold it as a

truth, cognizable to every mind which accustoms itself to trace the mazy winding of causes and effect, that its leading and primary evils are shrouded and concealed by the lesser or secondary ones resulting from them. We see clearly, as we suppose, many an evil presenting itself in the most glaring form ; we are shocked at what we behold, and conclude they are the greatest of enormities, whilst in reality they are but the effects of some less suspicious but more subtle agent of mischief. We accustom ourselves to trace evil in its most diminutive form ; we watch its complicated workings in families and in individuals ; we follow it into our own bosoms ; we recognize it in its every bearing, in all the minutiae and detail of its existence ; whilst we lose sight of the reservoir which constantly supplies the iniquitous stream and corrupts the whole. It is an error, sometimes, to view a subject too widely ; but it is an error, in viewing society, to view it too narrowly. It would be an error to tax the laws of a country as the cause of all its individual wrongs ; it would be equally unjust not to ascribe a great proportion of private calamity to public misdeeds.

Whether society is viewed as a whole or in parts, it equally interests all to prevent the introduction of disorder, owing to the close relation which the total amount of existing good or evil bears to each individual part. The originators of the greatest public calamities do not always escape the calamities themselves ; and still less frequently do those in the humbler walks of life, who inflict a positive wrong on the community, escape the evil they may have entailed on others. It is, indeed, conformable to every just notion we can form of the Divine government, to suppose that the originators of human wrong should be partakers of the wrong ; and it is equally conformable to the same rule to suppose that the highest and noblest enjoyments of life will never be

realized on any principles that do not ameliorate the condition, and tend to produce the final elevation of all classes.

In reviewing the position of mankind at large, we find a universal dependence of one nation upon another for the comforts as well as the superfluities of life. We see the hand of nature leading man to friendly intercourse with his fellow-man; and, surely, every unnecessary barrier placed in the way of exercising these natural and social relations, is a libel on the benevolent Author of nature, and aims to prevent the expansion of all the better feelings of humanity. This dependence of one nation upon another is by no means limited to any particular era of time. It is not in the least diminished, but greatly increased, by the growing civilization and intelligence of modern times. Seldom is it that even the most useful and valuable discoveries tend at all to lessen the relation and dependence of one country upon another. The reverse is the case, that in proportion as a people progress towards an elevated position, their wants and their dependencies increase. It is well for the world that it is so, for it is better that good should arise of necessity, than that it should not exist at all. The alliance formed by the hand of nature is, indeed, a holy alliance; an alliance which tyranny and war cannot break asunder, and which will ultimately show the expediency of universal fellowship. It is true, the hand of commerce is extended where the hand of friendship is withheld; that the laden vessel often steers an unwilling course; that enemy is seen providing for enemy the weapons of mutual hostility; but only in proportion as the terms of national commerce are formed on the natural and just basis of conferring and receiving reciprocal blessings, will their effects be beneficial and durable.

If the position of mankind at large is such as to render

friendly intercourse and friendly acts essential to the well-being of nations, certainly the closer relations subsisting amongst the several classes of persons composing the same community are of higher importance to the whole, and embody more momentous principles connected with the condition of each individual. The more narrowly, indeed, we watch the influence which one human being is destined to exert upon another, the more serious does the subject become. In families, very frequently, the comfort and happiness of the whole are dependent on the exertions of one member of it, and sometimes the moral defects of one produce the misery of all. In order thoroughly to eradicate the common evils which mark the general appearances of society, it is necessary for each one to know and feel the manner and the extent to which surrounding influences operate upon himself; and whether the outward impulse is elevating him as a rational being, or whether it tends to sink him nearer to the brute creation: whether it is benefiting or injuring him, it is necessary for him to become acquainted with the sources both of good and evil, which are continually flowing in upon him from without, and forming a part of his own existence.

Every individual is physically, morally, and intellectually acted upon by the general condition of the society in which he moves. The impressions arising from it may be more or less favourable, as each individual tendency may determine, but nothing can prevent the operation of a law universal in its application. Let this truth be made visible; let it become felt—tangibly felt. Let the individual raised above the reach of physical want, when he beholds the ghastliness and abject wretchedness of the poor who daily and hourly cross his path, feel conscious that a proportion of their misery is being communicated to himself; let him, when he beholds the imbecile

slave of his own passions marked with disease and bloated with intemperance, feel a consciousness that some degrading vice, resulting from the same source, is daily strengthening in his own mind ; let him, when he beholds the broken-hearted companion of some profligate husband—her once lovely face bathed in tears of bitter repentance—picture the first sad forebodings of the same misery just waking on the smileless features of a lovely wife, and the first tears of helpless poverty trickling down the cheeks of his children, and he will utter an endearing, a devoted resolve to save them.

The greatest of all errors to which mankind are subject, are those of strictly separating, in almost every instance, individual from the common interest ; or in not perceiving how the general good is connected with individual advancement. Taking the lowest, and, consequently, the worst view of the subject—its pecuniary bearings—mankind are perpetually struggling against even their own cherished and supposed welfare. If any system which has a tendency to increase and maintain the wealth of a particular class, to the positive injury of every other class, is persevered in, the advocates of that system lose, in their present and immediate object of pursuit, a future good. From the uncertain tenure of wealth, the position of every class should become a subject of consideration to the wealthy themselves. Fortune, capricious as she is, may be sometimes seen favouring the wretched and needy. These, once raised from the precincts of helpless poverty, may be seen in a few fleeting years pushing their offspring onward ; and these, after another short lapse of time, may be seen raising theirs still higher, till every trace of their humble origin has passed away from the frail memory of man ; but how much oftener is it that fortune proves false to its votaries, and brother beholds brother struggling, and at

length sinking amidst the troubled waves of adversity. Where now are the descendants of the once mighty Emperors of Rome—where the descendants of those renowned senators, those sublime orators, who framed laws for the whole civilized world? Where, had any existed, might have been the descendants of Lycurgus—where now are the descendants of Numa, of Solon, of Themistocles, of the Catos? They have sunk down into the ignoble mass, scattered as the dust of earth by the winds of heaven. And where, in a few years, will be the descendants of the wealthy and honoured, who now act some prominent part on the stage of life? Let history answer.

Man has hitherto cherished too highly a spirit of independence. Prone to centralize in himself all the essential properties of his own happiness; looking only to himself, to his family, or to his connections; looking only to a present and momentary good; he has narrowed, instead of expanding, his own means of enjoyment; and by thus unduly calculating on his own slender means of acquiring permanent good, and by lavishing on these all his attention, has subjected himself to a thousand ills which have grown around him unperceived. If the wealthy suppose that an impassable line divides them from the poor; that their enjoyments, their affections, their health, their moral susceptibilities, in fine, that their existence altogether is separate and divided, they betray, indeed, an almost unparalleled amount of ignorance. Equally as erroneous is it for them to conclude, that the welfare of society requires at their hands great and important sacrifices. It is not a relinquishment of life's best and choicest comforts; it is not an exchange of wealth for penury, of ease and plenty for privation and suffering; it is not an abandonment, it is not a sacrifice, of personal enjoyment at all that is required: it is a

recognition of principles; a recognition of the natural and inevitable tendencies of the human mind; a recognition of the close and diversified relations of man to man under all the endless varieties of human character and condition. The best safeguard for every man's real welfare is a universally improving state of society; for never whilst the habits and practices of one individual are found to operate upon another; never whilst vice is contagious, and virtue is capable of imitation; will any one class of persons be able to cut asunder the various ties which unite it to every other class that surround it. Whatever may be the character of individuals in their family circle; how affectionate soever a man may be as a father; however devoted to the welfare of his children; however anxious, however unwearied in his exertions to promote their happiness; if his attachment to them rests here; if he sees no connection between their interests and the common interests of society; his desires to obtain for them the good he seeks will, to a great extent, prove abortive; for he has mingled with his efforts a feeling of selfishness; he has trusted for a fruitful result to a fruitless source, and has looked for an end without attention to the means. The great end is to be sought in detecting and rooting out evils which characterize individuals as a body; in renovating the great machine, which, if disorganized in any of its parts, will work mischief to the whole.

THE CITY AND HAMLET.

HE who makes human actions his chief study, and endeavours by observation and experience to form a correct judgment of men and things, might be supposed to make the city the centre of his investigations ; but a true knowledge and estimate of life is to be acquired in almost every situation, however far removed from the busy throng. The deep and hidden things of life are not revealed to us amid the din of wheels and harangue of many voices. Inspiration comes in the still shadowy retreat, articulated in running streams and stirring leaves. When surrounded by all conceivable forms of time-killing amusements, we often betray ourselves into the belief that we are then truly awake, and forming correct and philosophical views of society ; but it is when we shut out the gorgeous light of visible realities, and sink into a state of comparative repose, that we perceive the true spirit and philosophy of existence. Even statesmen and warriors, men of the most enthusiastic and adventurous temperament, often construct and mature their plans in the retirement of solitude. It was at the most important juncture of the career of Lord Clive, when he was dreading treachery on the one hand, and surrounded by apparently insurmountable difficulties on the other, and half-shrinking from the responsibility of risking a battle with most unequal numbers, that, for the first and only time in his life, he called a council of war. The council decided against the attempt, and Clive concurred

in the decision ; but, accustomed to the most daring acts of bravery, he soon regretted his acquiescence. Having, shortly after the council broke up, retired to a lonely spot to commune with himself, he there determined, despite his own recent act, to risk a battle, and immediately gave directions for his army of only three thousand men to commence a march on the morrow, to meet an opposing force consisting of forty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry. The result was, that with a loss of only twenty-two men, he completely routed the enemy, and conquered an empire more than equal in extent to the United Kingdom.

It is not in the vast accumulation of things that we read their real history ; it is when a solitary production is placed before us, that we can best discover its nature and properties, and apply ourselves to a careful analysis of its parts. In the bustling city, we are at one moment attracted by the splendour of wealth—at another, we turn aside to behold misery in rags. The great Metropolis, the centre of commerce and wealth, with its three million inhabitants, appears at the first glance a more instructive school for the philosopher than the quiet hamlet with a population of but a few hundreds ; yet is there room to doubt the correctness of the supposition. How are we affected, through the medium of these great extremes, by the sentiment of death ? The philosopher of the capital sees one corpse after another, in almost hourly succession, borne along to the grave ; and truly these solemn processions, winding their slow way through the noisy thoroughfares, represent life and death in such contrasting and conflicting forms, that we cannot but pause to contemplate the scene ; yet, how much more instructive is it to the thoughtful observer, to witness the slow, yet certain, work of death in his native village. Every few weeks steal from that little community some

well-known form, and the familiar face of many years no longer greets him in his daily walks. In the hospitals and asylums of the city, we see humanity in its most fearful forms. In one we see those who, by accident, have been laid low; limbs torn from the body; bones forced from their sockets; or the frame shattered and deformed. In the midst of groans and agony, we see the appliances of human skill; the towels, the ligatures, the pulleys, and the force employed in replacing the luxated bone; instruments glittering in the hands of the operator, as he amputates the mangled limb, or cuts away some disfigured portion of the body. Another hospital presents to the view frail humanity smitten with fever; the ravings of madness and the low mutterings of delirium exhibit the dire wreck it has made of body and mind. We may traverse asylums for the deaf and dumb, for the idiot and insane, and see man deprived of the noblest instincts of his nature, till we shudder at the sight of so much apparent misery. But not less instructive is human life in detail. If these aggregate masses of mortal infirmity furnish the studious citizen with themes for sober thought, equally as fraught with useful teaching are the individual instances of calamity to be found in every quiet retreat. A clearer insight is frequently acquired on even abstruse and metaphysical subjects by simple observation than by determinate theories. Science draws lines, forms boundaries, and prescribes limits. It defines and specifies with exactness. Observation sees everything acting and existing in obedience to laws which govern on one universal principle—laws uniting object to object, and constituting endless relations without division of parts or disunion of purpose. In the asylum we see congregated a number of beings termed idiots, and, witnessing their strange habits and peculiarities, we are almost led to the conclusion that

they constitute a distinct class of beings, separated entirely from all others of the human species; but the poor idiot boy, who daily wanders through the streets and lanes of his native village, teaches us more clearly his relation to others—it shows us that what we term idiocy is not a condition entirely distinct and separated from all others, but that it simply forms one of the lowest grades in the scale of rational existence. If in the same locality we select the next lowest in the scale of rational life, and place him beside the idiot boy, we perceive many similarities and traits of character sufficient to mark their earthly relation. We should begin the ascending as we begin the descending scale. We commonly find in each little community an individual who possesses a superiority of intellect, as we find another of superior moral development; but we do not put on these any distinctive mark, or designate them by any peculiar title. We can select others who claim the second place in genius, learning, or moral worth, sufficient to constitute true companionship. As we thus ascend or descend, we see, in the varying capacities of the whole, a manifestation of divine power, so organizing each mind as to form an unbroken chain of relations binding man to man.

The law of graduality, extending from high to low, without parts and divisions, is the supreme governing principle that presides over all. In animate and inanimate nature; in the physical and moral world, it is the same. We can distinguish qualities, powers, and capacities, in one object or being, which we cannot find in another; but no object or being is so organized or individualized that it has no counterpart or significant relation to other productions of mind and matter. Every object which nature presents to us is of a relative character, as every improvement in social life, every inven-

tion, every discovery, has a relation both to what preceded and what will follow it. It is through a perception of the law of graduality, that human life, in a simple village costume, affords to the observer opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the various phenomena which attach to existence, uttered with a voice more audible, and expressed in language more eloquent, than is ever heard amid the crowd and babble of many voices. Objects seen distinctly and separately, can be better understood than others which appear dim and confused through their multiplicity.

What crowded resort can teach the true relation of the soul to outward things, or make revelations of the secrets of nature, such as seclusion unfolds? Is there not a teaching of high and holy things in the green lanes and shady woods where no voice speaks? Do we not imbibe something of the divine as we gaze from the mountain eminence upon the broad expanse of hill and dale, where we can see towers and spires looking out from the woods, and hear the joyous bells wafting their peals of gladness all round? When the music of the mower's scythe rings in the meadows, and groups of haymakers scatter the newly-cut swathe, perfumed with the blossom of the honeyed clover—when myriads of flowers are flinging the dewdrop from their eyelids, and opening wide their leaves to glow in the heat of the summer sun—when insect, and bee, and butterfly are rejoicing in their existence, and the glittering stream in its gentle murmurings seems to have caught the spirit of life, surely then must the soul of man expand to its highest, its noblest perceptive powers.

Survey yon hamlet in the quiet of departing day, with its cottages half-shrouded amid the foliage of over-hanging trees. What a scene of rustic content and rural enjoyment takes possession of the mind. In



this seclusion we might picture the abode of undisturbed felicity ; but here, as elsewhere, is human life unfolding all its varied and complicated forms of happiness and misery. At one glance we behold the several stages of existence. Beneath the aged elms that skirt the churchyard, are children and youths of various ages engaged in their evening pastimes ; whilst at the door of his cottage sits the sturdy labourer enjoying the hours of cessation from toil. Slowly pacing the green lane are the lover and his anticipated bride ; whilst, in sorrowful contrast, is seen an old man, so infirm that his tottering steps almost fail him. He is leading his grandchild, whose tender years have scarcely taught it to walk with safety. So nicely balanced appear the infirmity of age and the helplessness of childhood, that it seems doubtful whether the old man is taking charge of the child, or the child guiding the steps of the old man. What a variety of emotions spring up in the mind from the contemplation of such a scene, exhibiting the great extremes of life. How mutual appears the attachment of hoary age and feeble childhood. It is a happy companionship, that arises from their common sympathies and necessities.

There are but few, if any, of the leading facts and features of life exhibited in the city but strike the observer with equal or greater force in the hamlet. It is true, that in the city, knowledge, wealth, power, and distinction, all contrast strangely, with the surrounding ignorance, poverty, helplessness, and wretchedness ; but the hamlet will equally furnish us with specimens of the various conditions, habits, peculiarities, and misfortunes, incident to humanity. The wealthy squire who resides in the neighbouring mansion, amidst lawns, woods, and a spacious park, and sole proprietor of the surrounding lands and tenements, forms a contrast, great

as earth may need, to the peasantry who surround his paternal inheritance. By what a rapid process we descend from the mansion of the rich to the dwellings of the poor. The parsonage and a few houses of commodious dimensions, scattered here and there, comprise all that intervene. There is an abruptness in the appearance of rural society almost at variance with the elements of civilization, and in its exterior aspect half-akin to feudalism—too little of that peaceful and continuous undulating, which, on the broad expanse of ocean, links wave to wave in close and endless relationship—too little of the gentle blending of hill and dale, which, as we gaze from some picturesque elevation, seems gradually to unite earth and heaven.

Further than the hamlet we need not go to fathom the inmost depths of human nature. Love and hatred, ambition and content, forbidding pride and unassuming worth, severally find a place in these crevices of creation; nor are these quiet retreats exempt from a proportion of physical evils. How fearfully, sometimes, does the raging epidemic cut down the inhabitants of the crowded city—houses almost deserted, streets almost depopulated, whilst the pestilential churchyard is swollen with heaps of dead. The hamlet also has its seasons of disease and death. Fever enters the poor man's cottage, and cuts down the father of a family in the vigour of life, and before his remains are removed another sickens and dies. The poisonous effluvium pent up in the ill-ventilated apartment, containing at the same time both living and dead, increases in virulence, and lays low, at one fell stroke, brothers and sisters of various ages, and a few weeks suffice to engulf in one grave a moiety of the household. The flower of the field gradually springs from the earth, unfolds its parts imperceptibly, and passes on safely from stage to stage of its being. The blossom opens and dies away; its seeds attain maturity,

and age at length robs it of life and form. The insect expires not in the meridian of its brilliant career. If its existence dates but from the rising of the sun, and terminates with the twilight of evening, still it has a progressive existence, and one of certain duration. It lives the whole term allotted to its species. But man's mortal life is not thus begun and ended. He ripens for the grave at all periods of his being. It is as though an archangel from the invisible world was calling with loud and unceasing voice for an increasing supply of spirits, and, impatient of the progress of time, had reversed the decrees of nature.

Yon humble cottage with its woodbine porch and neatly-clipped hedgerow, that well might picture to the romantic imagination a scene of health and domestic comfort, shrouds from the view a scene of sorrow. Years of lingering infirmity have bowed down the old man who inhabits that rustic abode. Summer and winter have passed away again and again, and spring as oft returned with its songs of joy and flowers of beauty, since he last paced that once-loved garden. So long has he lingered a helpless prisoner in his chamber of wearied existence, that many, who once knew him, pass the spot forgetful that he still lives. Not often is it that death pauses thus to strike its victim, but slowly and fearfully sometimes does nature wind up this mortal coil. We see man anxiously, earnestly toiling to live; but how much harder is the task allotted him when years suffice not to end the toilsome task of dying.

There is no analysis of human life so big with profit, nor any conclusions respecting it so logically correct, as those resulting from a protracted knowledge of the same individuals, affording opportunity for a continuous study of the same characters. A passing glance at society in any of its varied phases is not a sufficient basis to lead

to the formation of a correct judgment. The same moral tendencies doubtless exist in city and hamlet, in the courtier and cottager. Particles of good are, in all places, found inseparably mingled with evil; and as we find amongst the most forbidding forms of matter valuable properties, hidden or latent, which become visible when some additional substances generate a new combination of the whole, so we find new forms of thought and action continually superseding each other, as different combinations of circumstances successively come into collision. By watching human life in its varied details, we perpetually witness moral results springing from physical causes. The flight of time, carrying forward human life from stage to stage, is ever changing the pursuits, the habits, the desires, and producing strange effects on the moral vision. How generous often are the feelings that characterize childhood and youth, yet how constantly do maturer years displace them by growing avarice and ambition. We often witness important results growing out of some new aspect in the outward condition of the individual. How often does stern want check the voice of gratitude, cool the ardour of benevolence, quench the thirst for knowledge, and seal up the warmest affections of the soul. So complicated and mingled are the various passions which alternately struggle for victory, that the most daring delineator of character has rarely passed the bounds of reality, nor has the tragedy of life ever yet been overdrawn. No; there is tragedy—deep, unfathomable—performed daily behind the curtain of private life. It is not a something of rare and extraordinary occurrence. To know what it is, we have only to learn the history of families, the history of individuals, and to look more searchingly into the nooks and by-paths of life.

SELF-EDUCATION.

IN delineating human character, writers have most commonly selected for their heroes those who have figured in some prominent character on the stage of life. Monarchs, princes, nobles, warriors, those in every department of society, whose acts have rendered them famous in the annals of history or tradition, furnish the historian, poet, painter, critic, and caricaturist, with their most attractive subjects. Even Shakspeare, that great unfolders of the human heart, has given the mighty of the earth a place amongst his chief actors. True it is, that the passions which are common to all, when brought into action where great interests are at stake, are roused to a more intense height, and for this reason are supposed to form the best examples for dramatic effect. The demands of the age have, however, in modern times turned the attention of writers to a class of subjects, in which more humble forms of life occupy a larger space. Sources of the deepest interest, and of the purest enjoyment, are now discovered in the retired walks of life with the same facility as the botanist finds his treasures in the solitary untrodden nooks of creation, or amid the entanglements of bush and brier. On the uncultivated hillock, where the peering sun but occasionally lets in a ray of his glory, do there spring up forms of exquisite beauty.

It must be admitted, that an extensive knowledge of men and things quickens the mental perception; and travels into far lands furnish materials for the observer,

which he would not dream of in his native fields, or by his own fireside; but Cowper could write vivid descriptions of men and manners, and minutely dissect the beauties of nature, without travelling the wide world o'er, and James Hogg could not understand why people could not write books without so much reading. The great difference between genius provided with all the great requisites of money, books, leisure, and society, added to the great advantage of travelling, and genius left amid the ordinary cares of life to pursue its way alone and unassisted, is, that perpetually passing images of beauty are reflected on the mind of the one from without, whilst the mind of the other reflects its own perception of loveliness on surrounding objects. The one has spread out before it a feast of rich viands from which it can select those suited to its taste, whilst the other goes in quest of mental food from every source within its reach. The mind having once acquired the power of thought and perception, can convert all objects, all periods, and all changes into sources of profound interest. Is there any spot of earth so rugged, so impervious to light and heat, or any climate so inclement or so barren, as not to possess interest? If we dig into the depths of earth, shut out from all that may delight the eye, wonders upon wonders still show themselves to us in the deep, dark chasm. Each stratum of earthly substance through which we pass is big with histories of the past, speaking to us in its sullen silence of periods in the eternity of time to which the date of our mortal race bears but a feeble comparison. Traces are there of forms and life with which the earth and ocean once teemed, which, after ages of duration, were crushed and extinguished by some huge convulsion of the mighty fabric, or changed by new combinations of matter. There come before us proofs of each succeeding order of creation, which like mountain rising upon mountain in some gorgeous scene, take their

places in the universal scheme, ascending from lower to higher, till that summit is attained which now forms the groundwork of this new and interesting theatre of life.

The grand educational process of the mind is the exercise of that keen perception or capacity which finds interest everywhere and in everything. This forms the great bulwark of intellectual liberty—its independence of place, time, circumstance, and condition ; so that if shut out from the externally beautiful and attractive, the mind can still revel amidst scenes which the imaginative faculty has acquired the power to create. What heds it where we stray or at what hour, if intent on finding objects of interest. Let us walk abroad even at mid-day, that most unpoetic of hours, when neither the lark's cheerful matin, nor the thrush's vesper hymn, can aid our imagination ; when neither the freshness of heaven's new-born light, nor the pensiveness of the dying day, can sober or elate the mental vision ; yet is there enough at every step, in every sound, in every object, to rivet the attention and engross the understanding. The secluded lane with its green hedge-rows has interest, deep interest for thought. To the solitary rambler it furnishes materials for marking the mighty changes which time has wrought in country and in town. But a few fleeting generations since, these delightful hawthorn avenues, now forming so prominent a feature in the rural scenery of England, had no existence. Their praises were uttered not in song, nor their evening shadows depicted in tales of amorous lovers. The cheerless rugged-hewed fence once stretched in dreary view over the broad acres. True, the scenery was more interspersed than now with heath and forest, breaking the drear monotony of these artificial compartments with the impervious foliage of the wood and the dazzling gorgeousness of the golden furze. Who among the little band of octogenarians in yon village, when, in youthful prime, driving his team

along this self-same road, ever dreamt even of that passable condition which it has now attained, with its nicely-arched macadamized centre and its gradual sloping sides formed of the finest turf? A century since, and this half-paved, half-carpeted highway, was rugged as the moon's surface, and impassable as the Alps. England, happily for her, no doubt, cannot now boast of those uninterrupted solitudes of which poets once boasted and sung in happy verse. Towns and villages have grown up in such abundance, and human beings have multiplied so fast, and busy trade and the busy husbandman have penetrated so thoroughly all the haunts of men and nature, that ere we can have listened long to song of bird, or gurgling rill, a human voice or earthly sound of something far or near breaks in upon the reverie, and things of earth again take precedence of high and holy musings. Walk on observant, busied in the study of nature; watching every motion, marking every object, listening to every sound, and hark! in the far distance—distant yet as the thunder when it breaks suddenly on the ear portentous of the coming storm—there is a strange, heavy, protracted sound, each moment growing louder and louder, and suddenly appears in the far valley a huge figure rolling swiftly onward with the fleetness of the race-horse, assuming the appearance of a flying car skimming the surface of the earth. Oh ye! our rude forefathers who rest beneath yon ivied tower, could ye but once arise to witness this ponderous machine rushing through the corn-fields with the roll of thunder, amid clouds of smoke, and armed with fire, would ye believe that your children's children were there, living, and yet flying over the earth, clothed with wings fleetier than the birds of air? No, ye would not, but would carry back to the invisible world tidings of the destroying angel traversing earth in his dreadful chariot of flame. As it rushes on through open fields and now

through the wooded dell, how interesting it is to mark its curved course by the volume of white smoke that follows its onward way. We watch its progress till the last trace vanishes in the distance, and the last indistinct murmur dies away, and we find ourselves once more alone with nature, where the withered leaf, moved by the motion of some concealed creeping thing, speaks to the listening ear, and there comes a new charm, as though the curtain had fallen upon some exhausted scene and opened up a new vision of loveliness.

The mind, in its mysterious desires, never waits for a season, or a favourite hour for the enjoyment of its mental food. It finds abundance in every period of existence at all times, at all hours. The blackest midnight darkness which envelops our couch gives interest enough to our rational powers. We awaken from our earliest slumber, and strangely indescribable is the first sensation we encounter between the state we have just left and that we have approached. The first effort of the mind is a confused, indistinct idea of existence, a feeling of animal life; and then a sudden and full recollection of what we are, and where we are; but in place of the familiar objects we commonly perceive around us, there reigns an impenetrable darkness. The eyes unclose for the purpose of vision, but their vast faculties of perception are gone. The balls roll sightless in their socket and vainly wander in search of objects which they are wont to greet on awaking. So useless are the organs of sense without the glorious counterparts of their existence. How strange, how solemn is this temporary destruction of the visual organ, and how it carries us up to the great Creator who pervades alike day and night, and makes both equally subservient to his purpose. Sometimes, when the organ of sight is thus unveiled, the first object discerned is a glittering star peering through the casement from the immensity of space. And

what on this theatre of life amongst its most impressive wonders so wonderful as this—that the eye should behold an object removed millions of miles from the planet on which we dwell. Strange, that through the whole of that vast vacuum we call space, nothing should intervene to hide from our sight those far-off regions of life and matter. How superior is nature in all her vast displays of grandeur to the efforts of human art. Watch the first symptom of approaching day; the first certainty of increasing light, how gradually it grows upon the sight. Objects familiar to the view close to our bedside, not yet fully developed, assume appearances curious and fantastic, and with every passing moment adopt new and phantom shapes; and ever and anon mock our faculties with false appearances. The opposite house is at first a dark, shapeless mass, only separated from the general gloom by the glimmering light, which, peering above the roof, marks it as a thing having height and proportion; whilst the trees assume form and lineament by the pervading light which marks their outline and separates one from another. But what a gorgeous diorama it is; still new views expanding on the vision till we find ourselves ushered into the presence of an endless diversity of beautiful images, and the world of to-day becomes the world of yesterday. Oh how wisely has nature adapted her ever-changing scenes of day and night, of storm and calm, of heat and cold, and good and ill, to a restless, change-loving being, such as man always was, and is, and ever will be. The mind only expands and ripens by the action of change. There is nothing permanent in its composition—there is no point gained at which it desires to stay—it is ever passing on, and leaves behind all that has been. We desire not spring with its budding leaves and early flowers, and feeling of joyous hope, because we wish that spring should be an abiding time, nor would we wish to make an eternal dwelling in

its garlanded bosom. No, it is that winter, with all its snug-housed and carpeted enjoyments, has grown too common, too worn, for our fluctuating desires. The cheerful fireside, the evening parties, the concert, the play, the vast stores of literary and amusing knowledge, themselves a vast and unexplored world of variety, have ceased to satisfy the restless monitor within.

Truly nature and man were formed for each other, not only because nature attracts the mind towards itself, not only because the mind is drawn involuntarily to the love and study of the sublime and beautiful, but that both involve in their very existence the elements of perpetual change. The very order of nature and the harmonies which it exhibits are all the result of change. The elements, though severally retaining an existence, restless and unsettled, are ever changing their form and condition; forming new combinations, and annihilating the mode of their previous existence. What is the history of the planetary system, and doubtless of all other systems, but one of ever-continuous change; huge masses of matter now progressing from order to disorder, and now again from disorder, growing into loveliness and perfectibility; perhaps to be again revolutionized and remodelled eternally in the mathematical cycles of their duration! And what is the history of man through the few succeeding centuries over which his biography extends! Not one page is there in the chronicles of his being but tells of change, onward, ever onward change—change in the development of his intellectual and social character—now a grovelling, untutored, unclothed animal, now a civilized, cultivated, creative, half-godlike intelligence. Equally big with change is the fate of nations. Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and ancient Greece have shared a fate but common to the world. Nations rise but to fall, and they fall for others to rise on the common ruin; and individual life, what

is it from the cradle to the tomb but one perpetual series of change—one perpetual round of physical, moral, and intellectual progression and retrogression. See that helpless babe whose passive features scarcely assume the distinctiveness of human individuality, yet in a few weeks only do we witness the rapid growth of its physical frame and of its perceptive powers. It has commenced a journey, during which there is no pause, no cessation. The place and scenery through which we travel to-day will be left behind to-morrow, and will never be seen again but by the aid of memory. And, oh memory! how dost thou betray us into error. How fondly do we fancy in our recollections of the past, that we travel over the same ground again, where we strayed in early days. True, there is a power in memory to recall facts and images, and to restore to us old localities, but, alas! the pure unsullied joys of early years, the glorious hopes and promises of a sunny future, and the realization of youthful pleasures can never be recalled in their purity and intensity by the most ardent efforts of the imagination. The mental as well as the physical powers are ever changing; and how can it be otherwise? As the frame emerges from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood, the mental development which marks each successive stage passes away also, and gives birth to new forms of thought. We strive perpetually to recall from past existence its dearest though faded delights, and we half fancy that old feelings are revived within us; but in sober reality that which has been never returns. Were memory a thousand times stronger than it is, we could never a second time realize bygone feelings, because the constitutional functions which at any period of our lives were the springs of our physical and mental life, have become so changed, that they cannot again act in the same capacity. Could memory restore to manhood the feelings and experience of youth, it would

be reversing the order of nature, which carries everything onward. Youth would be taking the place of manhood, and manhood the place of boyhood, and life would consequently retrograde from its ordinary course. To see, to know, to feel again what is past, in all its original intensity, would be no less than a subversion of the order of nature. It would be a real, palpable miracle. We pass on from scene to scene, happy sometimes as the bee passing from flower to flower, but, like that summer-day charmer, we cannot from the same flower extract the honey twice. We may pass, indeed, from scene to scene, enjoying sweet after sweet, and we may pluck "full many a fragrant flower," but never, never can we pluck the same a second time. We gather it, enjoy it, and it dies. This is no error of nature. Memory recalls facts, and scenes, and data sufficiently clear for all the practical purposes of life, whilst the mind, ever new, seeks and finds in every succeeding change of its existence new resources equivalent to its changing desires. To resuscitate any former condition of mind and to embody in our mental exercises only what we or others have before thought or felt, would be to suspend the faculty for new discoveries, new facts, and new feelings—a tendency not likely to emanate from the laws governing intellectual existence. A perception of facts and principles pervades all minds, however varying may be the capacity to follow them in detail. The perception of beauty is a faculty as universal as mind itself. The simplest rustic who goes forth to his labour on a summer morning, whether or not his thoughts may be directed to any particular object, is nevertheless conscious that a glorious scene surrounds him. The feelings of his physical frame are elated to a height of enjoyment scarcely related to the dull vacuity pervading his existence amid the gloom of a wintry day. The life of living light and beauty has penetrated his inward life and

touched it with sensations allied to a higher humanity. He may not, with a painter's eye, watch the ever-varying hues and tints of a gorgeous eastern sky ; nor, with a poet's ear, drink in the music of the towering lark's matin song ; nor may he see embodied, in the wide expanse of hill and dale, a perpetual feast for the mental voluptuary. No ; the details of these glories may be concealed from his contracted vocabulary of nature's language, but a ray of her divine light penetrates deeply into his mysterious dreamings. From low to high ascends this all-pervading sense of beauty in the outward world. One loves to gaze in rapt devotion on the blue waters of the mighty deep, as they stretch onward, far as eye can traverse the boundless distance. Another delights to revel in some gorgeous scenery that meets his view from a secluded eminence, and, without the attraction of any particular object, to drink in at a draught its sublimity as a connected whole. Another loves to gaze on the starry heavens, and, amid the still beauty of night, contemplate the immensity and mystery of interminable space. Another prefers to seize on some captivating object, and watch its wonderful endowments in all the details of its existence. It may be a flower, a bird, an insect, or even a creature belonging to some anterior order of nature, whose being and habits are attested by the very stones on which we tread.

So universal are the objects of interest, that we have only to cast a glance on the expanse of earth, and the eye catches an object, and the mind seizes on a motive, and feels a new impulse acting within. If the first object that meets the gaze be but a wall surmounted with a covering of earth, yet it is not devoid of interest. It hems in some hallowed spot of earth where human footsteps are ever pacing to and fro, and shuts in from the public eye the daily walks of domestic life. Where is

the cottage, humble though it be, but has been the scene of great events, of intense feeling, of glorious hopes, and of agonizing fears? It may have been the scene of new-born life, and of ghastly death,—it may have witnessed the warring elements of good and evil battling for the mastery,—it may have been the playground of happy childhood, and the home of innocent beauty. Where is an object but links itself to human sympathies, or calls something back from the far depths of memory? The rough-hewn stile, that marks the village pathway, may have become indelibly fixed in the memory of human beings. The first vows of earthly love may have been plighted on that rural seat; and that quiet retreat, which forms the rendezvous of the village youth, may be stored in many a bosom as a memento of enjoyments long past. There is no desert so barren, no situation so bleak and joyless, but the mind, by association, can convert it into a paradise, abounding with food for memory, and resources for thought.

ON MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

MAN is, at present, a being whose nature and capabilities are but partially developed. In the commencement of his history, living uninfluenced by any of the varied and conflicting elements which now operate on the mind, it was comparatively an untried, an unbiassed, and consequently an infant state of being. The thousand varying influences which now either excite or control his desires had then no existence, for the germ from whence arose these diverse entanglements of body and soul yet slumbered in the womb of time. A simple feeling of life, and a vague perception of an invisible power, constituted his existence. Since then, the tide of life has ebbed and flowed with ever-increasing velocity, and the fathomless ocean of thought has become still more and more the sport of the whirlwind and tempest.

There are now few but know something beyond the simple perception of life and outward objects; few but have been students in the school of tried thought. Mental discipline assumes numberless aspects. In some it may originate and become developed by physical suffering: and verily, in patient suffering there is much to learn. From almost any and every source, whether good or evil, the principle may be educed; but mental discipline as applied to the whole tenor of life, apart from all its great extremes, forms the present subject.

The most valuable department of this mental science is that which enables the contemplative mind to abstract

itself at will from the common occurrences and the tangible things of life, and bury itself amongst the invisible things of his inward nature. The object of life should be to commence, what all experience has proved must take place, the final separation of the outward and material from the spiritual and invisible. Truly, if man is destined for a future and higher life, it must be a spiritual one, refined from the grosser elements of mortality. The truest preparation for this change must be the abstraction of the inward from the outward, and allowing the imagination to roam at large amid the unconfined regions of space and time. Man is by nature fitted to become a social being; his very wants constitute his relation to others. Always to live alone would be to lose the free exercise of his powers. Never to live alone would be the sacrifice of the spiritual to the material. Every human being is strictly one. His mind's image may be reflected in many of its aspects by another, but he is so individualized that none can ever possess the identical supremacy of his internal self. No other can feel as he does. This is a privilege of which we should never lose sight. We should build within ourselves a sanctuary dedicated to thought, and in that sanctuary erect an altar sacred to the soul's retreat.

The social position of different individuals varies widely: some are surrounded by a chosen band of associates, with whom life flows on smoothly. The conversation, the habits, the tastes assimilate; the same views entertained on ordinary subjects prevail, and no intellectual want remains unsupplied; but if we are encircled by those whose views, whose pursuits, whose affections, are the opposites of our own, then has our mental existence no common relation, and the civil acts of life are all in which we can unite. We can perform together

our public duties as citizens ; we can meet together in our official and responsible characters as members of the same society ; we can unite together in the same religious services as the children of one common Father : but here our associated efforts end ; here the beaten road of our journey terminates ; we diverge into opposite paths, and lose sight of each other.

There are, truly, some periods in the history of man, when he has no choice in the subjects that must inevitably engage his attention. Some unavoidable pressure from without demands and claims all his thoughts. Some occurrence transpires, of so weighty a character, that he cannot divert his mind from it even for a moment. It may be a heavy pecuniary loss, changing the entire aspect of his outward condition ; and he feels himself, not a more degraded, but a more helpless being. It may be the loss of one near and dear, cherished and adored ; but time at length causes the bitterness and intensity of grief to subside, and it yields gradually to other impressions. It is wisely so ordained. A fearful chasm may be opened in the social lot of man, and he cannot at once return to his accustomed habits of thought. Sorrow has its valuable ends to accomplish, it softens down the extravagance which hope too often excites. Nature herself is not always sportive, the sun shines not always, the season of song passes away, and the birds become mute. The flowers fade, the leaves and branches die, and the root that is again to throw forth new leaves lies concealed in the earth. Absorption takes place, and the life that is again to be lies invisible. But, apart from all the great extremes which inevitably befall man, he does not sufficiently abstract his thoughts from the outward condition of his lot, or he would not so frequently fall a victim to disappointed hopes. The poverty that besets him, his fettered efforts, the waste of his

physical strength, the world's contempt, not all combined, would crush the spirit within, if exercised as an independent source of good. Because the morning passes away amid rain and storm, shall we not enjoy the calm and sunny evening which succeeds? Because discouragement has infringed on the day's amount of domestic comfort, must we also resign the exercise and enjoyment of the internal life? Cannot these be separated by effort and habit? Frail is the philosophy which teaches that anxiety for the future should ever destroy the enjoyment of the present.

To abstract the mind frequently and fully from the outward condition and the common routine of life, it is not necessary to seal up the affections of the soul; to shut the eyes that they behold not the ghastly victims of poverty and scorn, nor to close the ears against the never-ceasing cries of suffering humanity. He who sinks often within himself, will awaken to keener susceptibility of all the struggles of life, and, feeling the possession of an inward source of wealth, will more readily sacrifice the less valued gifts he may command for the weal of others; whilst he who beholds nothing in the good gifts of fortune but the elements of external greatness, feels that he holds within his living grasp a portion of the material world, and he clings to it as a part of life itself. He does not love his far-extending demesne, because the beauty of the fields shows forth the glory of the Creator; not because all nature is an impress of the Deity; not because he loves to watch the opening bud as it imperceptibly expands, and trace the flower from its first blush as it meets the eye of day, through all the stages of its change and decay. He loves not the forest that adorns his paternal inheritance for the grateful shade it yields in summer, nor for the shelter it affords in winter. He loves not his native woodlands for the

hymns that are chanted from the boughs, nor for the gentle winds that whisper amongst the leaves. He beholds only the material worth, the elements of his wealth, the ministers to his power. Verily, he loves not the returning light of day because of its glory. If he is joyed to behold the rising orb decking the eastern sky in purpled beauty, it is only because it will aid him to gaze upon the symbols of his riches, and light his path to new possessions.

I know it may be urged, that the outward world is beautiful, that it is all-engaging and all-engrossing; that the mind may ever be occupied in the common duties and common occurrences which every day demands and supplies. To the few whose means are commensurate with their wants, this may be true to a limited extent. The lighter amusements and easier studies that strew the way, may be so varied as to keep dull vacuity at a respectful distance; but all have not the good fortune so to place themselves on the stage of life's busy theatre, as to bid the curtain drop whenever the act ceases to interest, and again withdraw it to behold some new scene in the living drama. With the many, life is one round of never-changing toil, some expending their ill-supported strength on the soil, sink their entire being into one prolonged effort to support existence; others from day to day quit the dreary vault or garret for the loom, with no change, no cessation, to divert them from its never-ending thrall. In the centre of the busy town, some are so hemmed in by everything unsightly, that not the smallest plot of earth falls to their lot, not enough even to give life to the early snowdrop, and the other beautiful harbingers of spring, to tell them of the "good time coming." To those bowed down by the daily prostration of their physical power, but little desire can be felt for mental exertion; but to others, whose

employments are lighter, the day may be rendered less tedious by habituating the mind to separate itself from the never-ceasing monotony which every returning day brings with it. This is the principle that has so frequently elevated men above the common lot. It is this power of mental abstraction that has enabled the great spirits, both of the past and of the present, to shed new light upon the world. Numerous instances there have been, as every reader knows, of those who have thrown down every obstacle in the way of their mental elevation; one rising, like Wolsey, to power and magnificence; another bounding forth, like Johnson, to the height of scholastic eminence; another, like Franklin; and another, struggling on like the gentle Chatterton, who, though finally overpowered, yet persevered to the end, enduring life till endurance escaped from his relaxing grasp.

The external condition and appearance of life are the consequences of existence, but they do not constitute the life itself. The physical and mental life may appear inseparable, as far as any practical mode of dissection may be known; still, the physical life I lived yesterday is to-day no more, but the mental life I lived yesterday memory may again restore. How often does the eye of one behold beauty where another sees deformity; but how can this different result, this antagonistic impulse, be explained by the material organ of vision? Dissect the eye as minutely as you may, but nothing will there be found that will explain cause and effect. It is the spiritual, invisible eye of the soul that glances on the outward object, and makes a revelation of itself in what it beholds. The muscular energies of two individuals may have an apparent similarity, yet they do not, they cannot, manifest the same capabilities in the application of these inferior powers. In spite of flesh and blood,

they neither exercise the same powers of sensation, nor the same outward strength. The inward governing powers are still unlike.

The body and spirit do, to some extent, become separated in life. How true is it, that when the man of exalted intellect loses the balance of his reasoning powers, and becomes a victim of insanity, he dies a mental death, notwithstanding his physical life is continued; if they were one before, they are now divided; for he still eats, and drinks, and sleeps; he walks, becomes fatigued, and lies down to rest; the blood still circulates, the heart performs its wonted functions, and his muscular frame retains its energies; but the glorious light of life is extinguished within him; he has died the death of knowledge. Mental and corporeal death do not always occur together. The mind lives in all the vigour of its strength, in all the freshness of youth, whilst the body slowly and prematurely decays; and sometimes, when the intellectual existence has perished, the body lives and its strength grows. Mental death may take place at any age—it may be at twenty or thirty. Reason may give up the ghost at the very time when its brightest visions were about to be realized, when hope and joy had winged themselves into the interminable regions of space; but physical life may be protracted; it may not expire till the age of man is attained. Lord Chatham is said to have been in a dying state when he delivered his memorable speech on the American war; but, verily, his intellect was in the full vigour of health and strength. If the heart's pulsation was becoming feebler, reason, memory, the soul's warmest affections, were growing stronger. If the life's blood was forsaking his lips, and the livid paleness of death was becoming visible, the energy and eloquence of his soul were not forsaking him, for his voice proclaimed truths which will outlive the records of history.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SUFFERING.

THAT the human frame, surrounded by circumstances the most favourable to health, has from its own nature a tendency to decay, is a fact none will attempt to dispute. He who created man, ordained that he should die,—but how far the present vast amount of physical suffering is the natural and inevitable result of human organization, is a question that admits of much sober thought in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. As society puts on new appearances ; as its domestic habits become changed ; as its political movements vary ; as its moral and religious features assume new expressions, proportionate changes take place in the nature and amount of physical suffering. In one age, particular diseases predominate ; in another, these become almost extinct, and others, not less formidable, become scourges in their place. Some are continually modifying, and ultimately disappearing, whilst others are multiplying and assuming a more aggravated character.

These changes are ascribed, by eminent medical practitioners, to changes in the domestic habits of society—and, doubtless, these will account for much ;—but changes in the general condition of moral and mental feeling must be allowed a far greater share in producing these new phenomena, and in tracing out cause and effect. As the outward condition of the individual has almost invariably its relative moral aspects, so has the mental condition its relative action on his physical con-

dition. It is in vain that we resort to the strictest rules for the preservation of health, if mental disease exists. Air, exercise, clothing, diet, recreation, the command of the passions, and whatever, under favourable circumstances, may conduce to health and longevity, are but correlative influences, which, unless combined with a concurrent state of mental enjoyment, are like the glittering dewdrop of the morning, dissipated by the first breeze that stirs to motion the fragile blade to which it clung for support. Certain painful conditions of mind will as inevitably create derangement of the bodily functions, as intoxication will produce temporary aberration of intellect. In most instances of mental disquietude, whatever may previously have been the general state of health, indigestion will immediately ensue. The body does not wait the issue of the mind's combat before the sympathetic action commences; dyspepsia dates its origin from the exact period of the existence of that state of mind from which it proceeds,—it grows with its growth, and only ceases when its primary cause is removed.

In some instances, mental suffering will produce bilious affections; in others, hysterics; in others, convulsions, or epilepsy; and the various tendencies of all painful and agitated states of mind may be, and doubtless are, to operate in creating and promoting physical evil. The most irremediable and frightful of all diseases—epilepsy—is, very frequently, the result of mental suffering. On the dissection of those who have died epileptic, disorganization has commonly been found to exist in some portion of the brain, but not always. On this subject, Dr. Graham says: "After the most careful examinations, the inquiry perpetually recurs, whether we are to consider the diseased appearances present as the cause or consequence of the disease. I incline to the latter opinion; and it is certain that, in many cases of epilepsy, no mark

of disease whatever could be found in any part of the body." It may be fairly inferred, that the majority of cases in insanity originate in an undue ascendancy of some passion or passions. It may be ambition ; or, in its strongest and wildest form, ambition disappointed ; it may be avarice ; it may be the perpetual struggle between good principles and unholy desires ; it may be the unaccepted sacrifice of an undying love ; it may be a moral cause, although developed in its physical effects. It may be argued, that insanity is most frequently hereditary ; even then it follows as correctly, that a purer state of mental and moral feeling pervading society would prevent its transmission to succeeding generations.

It is true that much has been done, that much is still doing, and that much more will yet be effected, to prevent human suffering. Thousands of lives are saved annually by the introduction of vaccination. An extension of human life, and a mitigation of much suffering, have been effected by the advancement of science, by the advancement of medical science in particular ; by improvements in surgical instruments ; and by a more general knowledge of the laws of health disseminated amongst all classes ; but there is yet a vast amount of suffering which neither art nor science can check, which no balm can heal. What is there

" Can minister to a mind diseased,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ?"

Mental suffering is not always measured by the exact amount of hardship, privation, and misfortune ; for the capacity for endurance, and the power of resistance, are not alike in all. What discourages one, and produces a recklessness of the future, will animate another, and lead

him on to conquer. The amount of suffering in the animal world does not bear even a comparison with what exists amongst human beings. Whilst in the one case it is almost entirely the result of physical organization, it must in the other originate, not altogether in the more complicated anatomical structure of the being, but in the relation of the bodily functions to the more abstruse laws of moral susceptibility to which the reasoning creature is subjected. Society, as now constituted, creates suffering in a thousand varying forms, owing to the several classes of which it is composed refusing to recognize, in the relations they bear to each other, the laws of moral right. The civil laws of society bind class to class, and produce the apparent order that exists; but it is not, with the many, the willing obedience of the heart; it is an involuntary subjection, to which necessity yields. For a people to be happy and virtuous, they must be trusted, and suspicion must not always be following them about. Political oppression, moral perversion, mental degradation, and physical wretchedness, will ever go hand in hand. As the first relaxes in its severity, the evils of life will diminish; the purposes of existence will manifest themselves in the mental elevation of the masses, and a rapid decrease of disease and suffering will ensue.

The greatest amount of physical suffering induced by mental irritation is to be met with amongst those who are raised in the scale of society one link above the working classes. The divisions of society into what are termed the higher, the middle, and the labouring classes, are but ill-defined. There is no inconsiderable portion of the population occupying a position somewhere between what are termed the middle and working classes. This may fairly be termed the struggling class, and, perpetually contending with difficulties, they seldom rise high enough to excite permanent hope. They live in a state of con-

tinual dread and alarm, clinging to every object that offers enough support to prevent them sinking to the lowest depths of indigent misery. It is here that mental torture exists in its worst form. I have seen some reduced from competency to the lowest depths of want—their credit gone, and all hope of recovery has been lost: I have seen a ghastly paleness take possession of their features, and sickness ensue; and the mockery of administering medicine has been resorted to, but without effect; it has been but adding sorrow to sorrow. I have witnessed a change of fortune, and the rosy hue of health has returned—the smile of joy, the look of cheerfulness, and the voice of gladness, have been resumed. The gloomy forebodings of the past have given place to the purest hope and the most unsullied peace, and to a dark distrust of Heaven has succeeded hope and faith. The heart has again overflowed with gratitude, the hymn of praise has ascended on high, and the voice of prayer has been again heard. I have seen the anxious mother become burdened with sorrow, till her steps have failed her, and the dark grave has yawned in expectation of her coming. I have witnessed the cause of her anxiety removed, and her strength has returned—she has risen again with the sun, and pursued with cheerfulness the duties of her cottage home, till her little store of earthly goods has again made her rich, and her heart has throbbed with thankfulness and gratitude to the Author of all good. I have seen the lovely maiden, untutored in the arts of deception, bestow her affection on one unworthy of that high trust; but that affection, no sooner than bestowed, has been neglected, and the confidence of a generous mind has been betrayed: I have seen that lovely form nourishing a spirit of melancholy and dejection, wooing the sad shades of solitude in which to cherish her woe, and at length has sunk into the tomb, a prey to disap-

pointment. I have seen the young and beautiful daughter, the only hope of her parents, become the victim of seduction : I have seen her when the sweet smile of innocence and guileless love was playing on her cheek ; when the morning of her existence was fair as the bright dawning of a summer day : I have seen her when deserted, changed from all that once made life valuable, shunned by those who once flattered, spurned by those who caressed, and now the pity of all who behold her. Who is there but has marked, in a thousand forms, the influence of a diseased mind on the physical condition of the sufferer ? who but has seen the dismal pall thrown over the victim of mental disquietude ?

The causes of anxiety are almost as numerous and complicated as the human character itself. To trace them always to their source, would be to acquire a complete knowledge of all the motives which influence the will. They may originate with the sufferer, or from sources over which he has no control. One sows the seeds of misfortune, and another reaps the fruit. One commits a moral wrong, and another suffers the penalty which its consequences inflict. If virtue escapes the consciousness of guilt, it escapes not the pressure of overburdened feeling. Less reckless what befalls, virtue will meet the danger and brave the storm, from which vice, with cowardly step, skulks away. The leading cause of mental suffering, as of most other evils, is an education founded on erroneous principles. As soon as the mind of the child expands, it sees around it a world of beauty, and portrays to its imagination a career of happiness. There is no presentiment of future difficulties ; not a glance turned upon the dark page of life. To such conceptions, the mind in its earlier stages is not adapted : an omen from which we may gather hope that life does not bring with it all the evils it now ultimately yields.

As the essence of the youthful mind is to grasp at enjoyment, the best means of acquiring it should then be taught; but to what do the most common and approved principles of education amount? Does the ordinary course of youthful discipline teach the mind to know itself? Is that all-important study, the study of man, made a prominent feature in the task; or is not the attention more frequently directed to those acquirements which are exclusively intended to fit the aspirant to act his part in consonance with prevailing customs and institutions? The constitution of the mind, the power of habit, the nature of the passions, the consequences of all infringement of natural and moral laws, scarcely form a part, much less a prominent part, of early tuition. In most instances the human being finds himself placed in unlooked-for difficulties, and these increasing at every successive stage of existence; difficulties which a more extensive knowledge would have prevented, but which the most strenuous efforts of advancing life have no power to counteract.

The higher the standard of knowledge attained by society at large, the fewer will be the existing causes of mental suffering; for however innocently or wilfully we involve ourselves in a state of mental thralldom, its existence must be centred either in an imperfect knowledge of the tendencies of actions, in the incapacity of the mind to fathom the causes of its own miseries, or it originates in a solicitude for the attainment of objects presented to the intellectual vision through a false medium, the very possession of which may increase the evils they were intended to remove. True knowledge is a part of true religion: it is a fundamental principle on which to form the basis of every improvement: it points humanity far beyond its present bounds. Knowledge, like religion, appropriates to itself no particular

means of effecting the great work of man's moral redemption, it binds him to no stubborn rules, it seizes every opportunity of achieving good, wherever and whenever it can be performed ; it embraces everything that has a tendency to improve the social condition of mankind, it recognizes everything that is high and exalted in its nature ; it fixes no bounds to the free exercise of the understanding, and it does not limit the discoveries of science. It does not tell the mind to grasp at truth here, and leave it unnoticed there. True knowledge claims all excellence. It raises the standard of the soul in its pleadings for all that is lovely and attractive. Its ultimate end is to soften down the ills of life, and to add to the interest and happiness of society. It claims a right to check and subdue every evil ; whether assuming the form of bodily disease or mental suffering, or whether the two great sources of human wretchedness are linked together, it alike aims at their final destruction.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOUND.

MUSIC, and almost all other arts and sciences, had their origin in external nature, and rose into existence as soon as the human mind began to discover its own intuitions and powers of imitation. Associations of ideas, however rude, attached themselves to certain objects, and, as a degree of pleasure connected itself with the objects contemplated, the sensations thus enkindled aroused the mind to a desire for new combinations, till at length man struggled into intellectual life, and found himself in the midst of a glorious creation, himself a creative being. New sympathies, new affections, accompanied every new perception of ideal beauty, till science became moulded into features cognizable to the rudest mind. The beautiful and picturesque scenery which adorns the globe, and the perfect yet ever varied symmetry developed in the animal and vegetable worlds, taught the untutored painter the rudiments of his art, and led him at length, through centuries of improvement, to almost vie with nature herself. The rude sculptor of the early ages learned his first lessons in the majestic mountains which adorned his native land; or, by the light of the setting sun, he might have gathered instruction from the massy clouds that hung upon his native hills, as they unceasingly assumed new figures, and gave new ideas of forms and proportions. So was it with music. The instruments in use in uncivilized nations were almost formed in the natural productions

of the earth, such as the reed, the cane, and the bamboo, of which the Indians, the Chinese, and many others, formed their flutes and pipes. The Esquimaux, when visited by Captain Parry, had their drums and tambourines. When Captain Cook discovered the islands in the Pacific, he found music amongst the savage tribes there. They were in possession of several instruments, and could distinguish between the tones and half-tones. The flutes of the Otaheitans were composed of a hollow bamboo about one foot long. Their drums were hollow blocks of wood, of a cylindrical form, solid at one end, and covered at the other with shark's skin, whilst in the place of drumsticks they used their hands. At Amsterdam, one of the Friendly Isles, three instruments were found in use; one a flute, made like those of Otaheite, having four stops, which was breathed into from the nose; a second was composed of small reeds of different lengths, bound together like the syrinx, or "Pan's pipe"; a third was simply an excavated log of wood, which they beat on the sides.

These productions of a savage people, however simple, serve to show how the human mind, in its most unenlightened state, conceives methods of developing its natural capabilities. Some few references to the state of musical science in the early ages of the world may not be irrelevant to the purpose of this essay, in illustrating the influence of sound.

Although little can be ascertained respecting the progress of music prior to the Deluge, it is certain, from a few passages which occur in the Pentateuch, that some knowledge at least of the science had been acquired. In the 4th Genesis, 21st verse, it is said of Jubal, "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ"; and the concluding sentence of the same chapter, "Then began men to call on the name of the

Lord," is supposed, by some of the learned, to be the first introduction of music into religious rites. Calmet supposes it a recitation of the hymn to the Lord, "Holy, holy, holy."

After the Deluge, the Hebrew writings abound with descriptions both of vocal and instrumental performances. The reproof of Laban to Jacob contains the earliest reference of this kind: "Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and harp?" The next mention is that of the sublime song of Moses, composed on the occasion of the Israelites' miraculous defeat of the Egyptian army: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." This universal chorus of thanksgiving was accompanied with instruments: "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." The timbrel here mentioned is supposed to be the tympanum or tabret used in the East at the present time. The frequent descriptions of Hebrew music with which the Jewish writings abound, more particularly the Psalms of David, render it unnecessary to trace further its rise and progress amongst that people, but I may add, that Josephus supposes the number of musicians employed by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple to have been two hundred thousand. As respects the nature of the Hebrew musical instruments, but little clear information can now be gleaned. The supposed number of them is thirty-four; and attempts have been made by Mersennus, and also by Kircher, to describe them, but no successful conclusion has been arrived at. The psaltery, according to some Hebrew writers, was of the bagpipe kind; others represent it as having twelve strings.

It is well known that, long before the work of European civilization had commenced, the Asiatic nations had progressed far in many of the arts and sciences; amongst which was music. It was cultivated by the Chinese, the Arabians, Persians, Egyptians, and Indians. In Tartary fewer traces of its existence are to be found. Chinese tradition would, perhaps, on this and other subjects, carry us further back than we can comfortably travel. Some writers describe the invention of music to Fo Hi, the first Chinese prince, who is said to have made a beautiful lyre, and a guitar, which produced a noble harmony, curbed the passions, and elevated man to virtue and heavenly truth. In a work entitled "The History of that great and renowned Monarchy of China," by Alvarez Semedo, is an account of musical instruments. Amongst these is a flute, and an instrument formed of thin pieces of wood, which they laid together, and played upon all at once, like snappers or castanets. Dr. John Francis Gerrelli Careri, who visited China in 1696, thus writes: "The Chinese musical instruments wholly differ from ours, as well in the shape as manner of playing them. Not to speak of those made of stone, of brass, and of skins, extended after several manners, they have some of only one string, of three, and of seven, which are their lutes and violins; and another most ancient sort, partly like our harps; but their strings are not small guts, nor of metal, but of silk twisted." Sir George Staunton says, that at Turon, in Cochin China, the embassy attended the performance of a kind of historical opera, in which were the recitative, the air, and the chorus, as regular as upon the Italian stage.

It would be tedious to recite in this manner even a small portion of the evidence of the rise and progress of music in different parts of the globe. Wherever history has traced human beings, it has traced the influence of

sound on the mind,—in the deserts of Arabia and in the wilds of Africa has it been developed. The Hottentot will sit and play for hours together upon the *Gorah* with increasing pleasure, whilst those around him listen with as much delight. A celebrated traveller, Mr. Bowdich, relates the following very remarkable incident: “It was in the interior country of Imbeekée, where I met with a musician of the most loathsome appearance. He had a harp formed of wood, with eight strings, made of the fibrous roots of the palm-wine tree, the tones of which were full, harmonious, and deep. He ran through a variety of notes, ascending with his voice beyond the extent of his harp, and all at once burst forth in the notes of the *Hallelujah* of Handel.” Mr. Bowdich adds, “To meet with this chorus in the wilds of Africa, and from such a being, had an effect I can scarcely describe, and I was lost in astonishment at the coincidence.”

It is a proof of the mighty influence of sound, that it has been called into existence on all great occasions, whether of a joyous or mournful character, where an effort has been made to produce excitement. Grecian history contains numerous accounts of the introduction of music at public ceremonies; particularly at the celebration of the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemean, and Isthmian games. In Roman history, mention is made of music on occasion of one of the victories of Romulus, 749 years before Christ, when, according to Dionysius, the army, horse and foot, followed the chariot of the conqueror, hymning their gods in songs of their country.

The marriage ceremonies of almost all nations include musical performances; indeed, history abounds with notices of this description, wherever festivities, public or private, are mentioned; and it is needless to trace further instances in proof of the universal consent of mankind to the influence of sound. There is no history but attests

its universality, so closely is it interwoven with all national events. There is no circumstance of importance connected with our own times, but has associated itself with this powerful sentiment. Whether as a signal for some mighty battle, or as a mark of some glorious victory; whether in commemoration of some public benefit conferred, or of some moral and intellectual triumph achieved; on all great occasions, indeed, particularly those of public rejoicing, has this powerful engine of the mind been called into action. It forms a part of our public amusements; it forms part of our private recreations; it associates itself with our religious services.

So rich in design and so full of purpose is nature in all her productions, and so bounteous is she to man in particular, that to this great head of creation every other phenomenon bears some strict and definite relation. Not only is every natural object adapted to convey pleasure to his mind through the organ of sight, but every sound adapted to communicate enjoyment through the medium of the ear. It is not unworthy of remark, that there is scarcely any situation in the habitable part of the globe but gives existence to birds capable of delighting the ear of man; and however great an enemy he may be to their peace and enjoyment, still, in spite of the persecutions they meet with at his hands, they approach his dwelling to heighten his enjoyments, to cheer his social hours, to soothe him in sorrow, and waken anew in his bosom sentiments of past delight. The martin, placing itself entirely at his mercy, seeks a shelter and a home beneath his roof, and, with its early twittering, cheers him when awaking from his slumbers. The robin, reposing an equal confidence in his friendship, raises its young beneath his eye, and, as if conscious of the feebleness of its voice, or fearful its pensive notes should be unheard, seldom forsakes the yard or garden where its home has become fixed.

The further we recede from the habitation of man, the fewer singing-birds shall we meet with ; and it is a remarkable circumstance that aquatic birds, and others which are not destined to hold converse with man, have no music in their voice, and, if placed within reach of human dwellings, would prove a source of annoyance rather than one of pleasure. Most sea-birds utter a monotonous cry, or a shriek incapable of producing on the mind a sensation of pleasure.

Whether the result of human organization, or, combined with this, the effect of education and habit, individuals vary most materially in their perceptions of everything relating to the mind, whether of an intellectual or moral character ; consequently the several orders of sound excite an equal variety of emotions. From the loud crash of thunder, which rends the vaults of heaven, to the lingering peal that dies away in distant murmurs ; from the tempest that roars in its fury, to the faintest breeze that stirs the leaf of spring ; from the roar of the foaming cataract to the bubbling of the peaceful rivulet ; from the hoarse bellowing of the ox to the shrill bark of the pampered spaniel ; from the pure and melodious song of the nightingale to the simple chirping of the sparrow ; from the loud hum of the beetle, as it wings its rapid flight in the twilight of evening, to the sweet music of the bee as it passes from flower to flower beneath the rays of the summer sun, each sound exerts an influence, varying in its extent, according to the several peculiarities of mind and feeling on which it acts. Whilst one would listen with delight to the distant falls of Niagara, or sit entranced on some romantic eminence, gazing on the foaming cataract as it leaped from rock to rock beneath him, another would prefer the noise of a country fair, where he might listen to the recital of a ballad. It is

asserted of Dr. Johnson, that he was fonder of the black smoke of London than of the green fields in the country, and preferred the bustle of Cheapside, and the tide of life in Fleet-street, to the quiet of a secluded field, and the tolling of St. Paul's to the murmur of a brooklet.

The mind, prone to indulge in the wayward wanderings of its imaginings, if free from the pressure of particular impressions, is sure to be impelled in a direction most in accordance with the dictates of external nature. Thus, in spring, the mind is lured into a series of delightful thoughts, in unison with the opening beauties of the year. We then indulge in gay and delightful sentiments, and feel awakening to a new and happy existence; but when the beauty of spring, the fragrance of summer, and the pensive calm of autumn have passed away—when the darkness of winter is spread around us, the cold rain streaming down the windows, and the noisome blast howling at the creaking doors of our dwellings, how widely different are the emotions of the mind. To an extent, far beyond what we may conceive, are we influenced by sound, although we may not remark to each other the effects we feel, as the result of what we hear, and although from the mind being absorbed in reflection, or attentive to any common pursuit, we may have no direct proof of its influence, there is, there must be, if not a known one, an imperceptible action upon the mind, of whatever comes within reach of the ear. The clock which constantly bespeaks in our presence the flight of time, may proclaim the hour, and utter its momentary warning for many successive days, without a single thought being attracted to it: but, though we may not sensibly notice it, the action of its presence is not lost; for if the clock be removed, we immediately become aware of the loss of something to which we have previously

been accustomed. We cannot receive a particular sensation from any sound without first applying it to the mind, and allowing it time to call forth its relative associations. The great end of sound is to collect and condense, in one act of feeling, previously conceived ideas of things, and to produce by the combination an instantaneous effect. The influence of sound in constantly awakening the same ideas, and, by a perpetual recurrence, impressing them again and again on the mind in the same manner and combined with the same momentary feelings, is one of the mediums through which that important faculty, memory, derives its support.

Music is a science, and is, therefore, by the exercise of reason, adapted to an end; that end being to awaken sensations of delight. The effects of natural sounds, however, I conceive, to have a higher and more refined tendency; a tendency to assist more in the development of all the nobler feelings. There is this essential difference in the effects produced by a musical performance, and those resulting from the action of natural sounds. During the first, the mind becomes absorbed and lost to all sensations which do not immediately flow from its overpowering influence, for which reason it awakens no intellectual vigour; whilst the harmony of nature is continually refreshing the powers of memory, and thus acting upon the reflective and moral faculties. There is, however, one exception to this rule, of a prominent character. I refer to the influence of bells. There are none, it is imagined, who are at all moved by the witching power of sound, but have a thousand times felt their magic power, listened to them with delight in their evening rambles, or felt their hallowing effects when aroused by them on a Sabbath morn to a sense of duty and religion.

I have already premised that the influence of bells is more closely allied to that produced by natural sounds

than any other resulting from artificial causes. This phenomenon is to be ascribed to their simple construction, and their high antiquity. First, then, the simple construction of bells. An octave, or any other number of tones following each other in close succession, does not constitute sufficient alliance with even an inferior musical performance to render similarity of effect possible. A peal of bells, consisting of eight, six, or a lesser number, if the half-tones are truly observed, presents a form of properly-arranged harmony, but in the most simple form imaginable. It is easy to select instances of natural sound more closely allied to the science of music than bells, both by the sweetness and variety of tones produced. We may take as specimens the morning song of the blackbird, and the midnight song of the nightingale. In both these, but more particularly in the latter, there is a sweetness and variety of tones produced far more delightful to the lover of harmony than the monotony of a peal of bells ; because the notes, although less perfect, are more varied. In chime-ringing, the effect is materially changed, because the variations betray the mind into a more scientific state of feeling. Another reason why I suppose the effects of bells to be more closely allied to those produced by natural sounds than to feelings excited by any other form of harmony, is their high antiquity. Many of our church bells are coeval with the walls in which they swing to and fro. The same bells which now usher in the Sabbath morn called up the devotional feelings of our ancestors hundreds of years since ; and the same method of chiming at three different times, a method originally introduced to announce the several religious services of the Roman Catholics, is still perpetuated in most of our villages and hamlets. The same merry bells which ages ago proclaimed the great season of festivity, still announce the

joyous period. The same melodious peal which accompanied the nuptials of our forefathers, awakes on the same happy occasion now; whilst the solemn tones which bespoke their decease, still utter to us the same mournful tale. It is the connection of bells with so much that has passed away that gives them their hallowing influence, and connects them with the things that have been. The effect of many natural objects is the same. The aged tree, and the wintry night winds sweeping through it, remind us in the same manner of the past; for the same tree existed, and the hoarse moaning of the winds was heard amongst its branches by those who have gone before us to the world of spirits. Similar sentiments will be awakened by the contemplation of any objects or sounds which form the basis of superstitious records, because they speak to us of the past. The connection of bells with natural sounds, and their tendency to produce similar feelings, is beautifully delineated in the following lines of Wordsworth :—

“ I love to hear a murmuring brook,
I love to hear the Sabbath bell ;
I love to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.”

That it is the antiquity of bells which principally directs their influence on the mind is shown by the fact, that they almost invariably refer the mind to past events. They take us back to days of childhood, to hear again our nursery tales, and shudder at what they bespeak. They take us again to the pansied meadow, to pluck afresh the fair flowers of spring, and weave showy garlands for infant brows. They take us back to boyhood, to dream again its bright dreams, and renew a thousand happy incidents of those sunny hours. They teach us how to live again our past existence, to smile at what

we once smiled, and to weep again over scenes of past sorrow. An anecdote of Napoleon, related by Rapp, a French officer, is richly illustrative of the influence of bells:—"It was after the battle of Austerlitz. The Emperor was riding late in the day over the battle-field, unmoved by the awful spectacle of the mangled dead and dying that on every hand met his stern gaze. He might have been at the moment half-forgetful of the scene before him, and planning new schemes of success, when suddenly, borne on the wings of the evening breeze, the village bells of Brienne struck up a merry peal. The Emperor paused to listen, and, for once at least, his haughty spirit was subdued. He dismounted from his horse, and, seating himself on a tree, burst into tears. The recollection of those happy hours, when, in the playfulness of youth, and not yet the victim of insatiable power, he had so often heard the same melodious peal, brought back, at one instant, a thousand past feelings which, unbidden, had rushed athwart his memory and changed him from the hero of Austerlitz to the school-boy of Brienne."

The influence of bells serves to show how trifling a command we sometimes have over the direction of our thoughts and feelings, and how much we may become the creatures of circumstances by the action of trivial external impulses. The reader will, perhaps, pardon one reference of the writer to himself, as the subject awakens at the moment emotions he has no wish to control. However high the spirit may sometimes soar above surrounding objects, giving the rein of the mind to imaginary pursuits, revelling in unreal splendour, and making within itself a new world wherein to mingle with congenial beings; yet moments there are when the higher and better parts of our intellectual nature seem to have perished, or, if they have not perished, when they

slumber, and leave a vacuum which there is nothing to fill. Such to me was the hour of which I am about to tell. It was early on a cold and dark December morning. I had been sitting before the fire amusing myself by watching the flames as they shot forth, and struggled one after another to burst from their imprisonment; it was an hour in which I felt incapacitated both for bodily and intellectual exertion. I felt no desire to roam over the past scenes of life; no delightful dreams of by-gone days stole away the passing moments. I felt no desire to improve an hour so friendly to contemplation, nor did even a solitary thought of life's brevity fleet across my mind. Whilst in this uninteresting mood, I was suddenly aroused by a peal of bells, which was wafted from a village about a mile distant, where my boyhood was passed. But how shall I describe their effects! From a state of inanity I was aroused, involuntarily, to a most active state of feeling; and memory began to roam over the past scenes of life. I felt again the feebleness and fondness of childhood, and the playfulness of boyhood; and the warmth of imagination which so falsely portrayed the happiness of coming years; and the sanguine expectations of youth, conjuring tales airy as the first phantoms which hope had nourished; and the first dreams of love, and the first picturings of loveliness, again rose up as forgotten ones from the grave. Many a tale of childhood was again heard; many a companion was again met; many a pastime was again renewed; and many a well-known spot revisited, and powerfully was revived the image of departed friends; they lived and moved again, and their voices were heard; and their words felt; and the smiles of those who loved were again repeated. Then came in review years of higher importance, all revived again in that brief career of awakened memory. Hours rolled on, but the vision of past days still hovered

over me, till life's ceaseless cares and its fruitless anxieties again riveted my thoughts to present objects, and I exclaimed,—

Oh, were it not presumptuous, I would pray
 That when my disembodied spirit has passed
 From its frail tenement, it sometimes might
 At winter's cold and moon-lit hour return,
 And calling up my dust, aid me to stand
 A thoughtful spectre on some mouldering tomb,
 To hear again the merry Christmas bells.
 For in that sacred hour, I could recall
 The sweetest moments of my mortal being ;
 Live o'er again each well-remembered hour,
 See ev'ry friend, and call to life anew
 All frames, all feelings from my boyhood up
 To life's last moment ;—and I too would pray
 For power to pace again some brooklet side,
 In those same moments when the full-orbed moon
 Looks sweetly smiling through the leafless trees,
 Upon the playful stream.

The influence of sound is a subject of so copious a character as to embrace in itself a thousand others. It is a topic which connects itself with all others of general interest. What would be the poetry of any nation, or of any age, if robbed of the spirit of song ? What would be the poetry of Scotland without the ballads of its bards and the harps of its minstrels ? The influence of sound is connected with the influence of literature, and as closely connected with the influence of individuals. It marks every occasion of pure joy and of deep sorrow. It may be the song of gladness, the peal of merriment, or the shout of triumph, or, on the other hand, the sigh of sorrow, the groan of agony and despair, or the knell of death, and sometimes even as a mournful voice from the grave, when the earth, falling on the remains of some loved one, seems to echo back the never-to-be-forgotten words—"ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

THE LIMITED POWER OF SPEECH.

MAN, as the highest and noblest species of known beings, is endowed with a power of communication through the medium of speech, which does not appear to be approached by any of the inferior creatures; yet is it extremely doubtful whether the capacity of utterance by sound, gesture, or motion, which all inferior forms of life possess, is not more perfect than is the capacity of man to utter forth distinctly his own thoughts and feelings. The beast, the bird, the fish, the insect, and doubtless the more minute tribes of living things, can communicate to each other all that the instincts of nature require. How perfectly does the bird teach its young all the habits of its own nature. It is not the mere instinct of life that gives to animals or birds all the peculiarities of their character. When domesticated by the hand of man, they do not possess the same degrees of caution, sagacity, and foresight as when nurtured and taught by the parent. In proportion as they are taught by man, they lose much of the character that belongs to their species. Their form, their organization, is not changed, but the more perfect communication with their own kind having ceased, they lose the perfectibility of those instincts with which the pure teaching of nature would have inspired them.

Man, guided by the most favourable condition of his outer life, is incapable of attaining any fixed standard, either of moral or intellectual excellence, nor can he

always control the physical tendencies of his being ; yet over all these there is an internal capacity or reflecting power, that takes cognizance of everything incidental, both to its own existence and to what exists in the material world. Scrutinizing, however, as is the genius of deep-seated thought, vivid as may be its emotions, rich as may be its imaginings, and eloquent as may be its utterance, either the limited power of delineation, or the barrenness of language, prevents the outer expression of thought and feeling reverberating a correct response of that within. There is no tangible fact, nor any recognized condition of physical existence, but may be communicated from mind to mind by the usual forms of speech ; but there is much in the elevated regions of thought which cannot be reduced to the ordinary capacity by the most studied selection of words. The order of thought which pervades minds of the most delicate and flexible texture can never be fully comprehended by minds of an inferior order. No two minds, it may be, are similarly constituted ; yet we do not think it difficult to classify mental acquisition. We can recognize minds of the very highest order from all others. It is not difficult, in the arts and sciences, to select those who take the highest position. We can define the difference between second-rate talent and plain mediocrity, and we can divide mediocrity from all inferior claims ; but the question here is, whether minds as congenial as can be supposed, whose powers of comprehension, of imagination, and of practical utility, are considered equal, have the capacity fully to make known to each other the extent of their mental experience ? We read the works of a common-place author, and then cast them aside for ever, supposing that we have fully comprehended all the meaning ; but with the writings of Shakespeare it is not so—the most acute minds peruse them again and again, still

finding new fields of interest, new sources of thought ; simply because there is much at first undiscovered, which develops itself by increased effort to fathom the depths which lie concealed so far below the surface. There is in all truly great minds an under-current of thought and feeling, which defies the ordinary medium of communication. Call it the overflowing of deep thought ; call it the fire of imagination ; call it the outbursting of impassionate feeling ; or designate it by any yet more appropriate name, there is an inner tide in the mind's fathomless ocean which neither the delineator of human life can sketch in prose, nor poet breathe in living verse.

Not only is the mind incompetent to communicate its own powers of action, but it fails to trace out cause and effect within itself. It may be considered an untenable position to define the law of mind in one instance, and adopt a different hypothesis in another. It is not, however, more difficult to substantiate such a theory, than to prove that ideas may be either simple and intelligible, or abstruse and undefinable. Thoughts which arise in the ordinary course of conversation, or ideas growing necessarily from the discussion of a well-known subject, may be clearly assignable to the recognition of known facts, or arising in due order as the result of observation. Take up the journal of to-day, or yesterday, containing the ordinary routine of Parliamentary business. The debates, many of which bear evidence of the gifted character of the speakers, contain arguments of varying strength or weakness, sometimes of a logical, and sometimes of an illogical, character ; some betraying a strong party tendency ; others formed on the broader principles of right and wrong : yet, varied as the opinions of the speakers may be, it is not difficult to comprehend the nature of the question, nor to trace the diverging views of the debaters. So in a court of law, different views may be advanced

as to the probability of certain facts having transpired. One contends, very strenuously, in support of one class of evidence; another urges, most eloquently, that such evidence is both inconclusive and erroneous. Now these and similar occasions afford no proof that the mind is incompetent to explain its own workings; nor that those so employed do not comprehend each other to the fullest extent. The different views entertained may be either of a party or a professional character, in assuming which it is no uncommon occurrence to make black white and white black; but however contradictory may appear the modes of reasoning, or however different the conclusions arrived at, there is nothing but may be explained on the principle of opposing professions or prejudices: but when we come to analyze the deeper-rooted feelings of the soul, there is much felt that cannot be communicated. There is a combination of ideas often present, and these of such an involuntary character, that when they have passed away, and left room for more simple and collected thoughts, sober imagination, with its highest efforts, fails to furnish the power to express them. They come unlooked for—vivid as the electric shock, and they pass away, swiftly as the April shadow! crosses the valley. They were; they are not; they will never return. As we walk through the fields, quietly enjoying the scenery, we are suddenly greeted by the merry pealing of the village bells; and momentarily, as though some new power had been implanted within, we find ourselves transfixed to the spot; whilst imagination, as it were, bursting with energy, awakens such countless fragments of by-gone images and feelings, that the brain almost gives way, overpowered by the rush of a thousand ideas; so rich indeed, but yet so vague, so coloured by things that once were, that like some half-remembered dream, they never can be told. The new-born flower greets us

with its beauty and fragrance, but, not content to win our admiration and delight, it carries us away, as though by some unearthly power, to years long past, and crowds the imagination with objects and scenes never in reality to be witnessed again ; renewing impressions, which indeed can never be entirely erased, but which only light the flickering lamp of life with their native brilliancy, when the mind is attuned in highest strains. Why are we so suddenly attracted by the simple murmuring of the brooklet as it leaps over its rough bed of stones ? Is there some undefinable harmony in its untiring voice, or does it by some mysterious agency make revelations to the soul, of invisible and unspeakable things ? Surely there is inspiration in its utterings, yet so inscrutable that it never can be disclosed to other ears.

There is a power within, fathomless as the ocean ; a vividness of perception that may arrest bodily motion ; that may impede or facilitate the circulation of the blood ; that may give to the features the ghastly paleness of death, or suffuse them with the fulness of life. Thoughts may arise, so big with joy, or so shrouded by sorrow ; mental power may become so big, so intense, as to overpower physical strength, and cause the heart's pulsation to cease for ever.

That facility of utterance ; those impassioned tones and gestures ; those living words, which have chained, as with a spell, the breathless audience of a Burke or Demosthenes ; never yet unfolded, to mortal senses, the vividness and power of man's deepest inspirations.

MEMORY.

HOW useless it is, above all things, to conjure up thoughts of what never has been and of what never may be, or we might attempt to form some conjecture as to what man would be if deprived of the power of memory. In possession of every other bodily and mental endowment, what a dark, chaotic existence must he live. The present would constitute his all. Most truly would he be the creature of a day. Did the deep slumbers of night, as they shut out the world and seal up the avenues of the mind, annihilate the recollection of the past, and yet leave the waking mind in possession of its reflective and perceptive faculties, how poor, how stagnant, would life become. Yet who knows, but somewhere amongst the vast diversity of beings which people the universe, such creatures there may be—ever beholding, ever admiring, ever enjoying, yet ever losing the past in the present. If the organization of man precludes the possibility of this condition, still do there exist some near approaches towards it. The strong intellect, now stretching forth into futurity, and now gathering up, with almost avaricious greediness, the accumulated history of ages, at length sinks beneath the crushing burden of his mental possessions; some strange form of idiocy ensues, which leaves him no resource, but in the glittering toys, real or imaginary, that appear and re-appear before him.

No faculty of the mind is more wonderful than memory, nor is there one of higher importance. Memory and reflection are, in some respects, allied ; in others, they are separate from, and independent of, each other. Reflection has its various departments ; its creative energies ; its powers of conceiving, weighing, deciding ; but memory, or the power of recognizing the past, is neither so complex in its nature, nor so dependent on the other senses. These separate powers do not date their existence from the same period ; they do not, at least, develop themselves together. We must acquire knowledge of things, combine ideas, and form attachments, before memory can be called into action. In an infant, memory does not become apparent till the other faculties have developed symptoms of progressiveness. You may amuse it with any object that has a lustrous appearance, or that produces sound on being touched. We will suppose it a violin. The child is always delighted with the sound, but it does not, for some time, recognize the instrument as the object which gives it pleasure. If the same effect were produced by any other object, it would be equally pleased. But, by-and-by, the little innocent learns to associate the sound with the object, and hails the instrument with enthusiastic rapture. Memory has then begun to act ; but before this takes place, there is a capability of deriving enjoyment from a source which the mind has not the power of again calling into existence—a circumstance quite incompatible with a matured state of the intellect. The many hours of playfulness and delight which a child enjoys whilst in the arms of its mother, are forgotten as soon as past ; and if, during those tender years, the parent is torn away, almost as soon is she also lost to memory. When I was about four years of age I lost my mother, and scarcely a trace of her now exists in my mind. All the affection and kind-

ness she bestowed upon me ; the many hours she devoted to my health and happiness ; and all the reciprocal delight we experienced, are buried in oblivion. The day of her interment is the only one connected with her history that I can recall. Previously to my being sent from home early on the morning, I was shown the coffin that contained her remains ; and on my way to a neighbour's, leading through the churchyard, I distinctly recollect seeing the vault that was open to receive her. Oh ! how little has memory preserved to me of a being from whom I received, and to whom I owe, so much. No portrait of her exists, or I should exclaim, with Cowper—

“ Oh that those lips had language.”

It is in the earlier periods of life that imagination is most active and vigorous ; and in its decline, when the active principle becomes feeble, that memory acquires new strength, and often continues healthful to the latest period. This, in some measure, accounts for the fact, that old persons rarely approve of modern inventions, or allow that their own discoveries admit of improvement. They have a perfect recollection of the utility of everything that obtained popular favour in their own day, but do not sufficiently investigate any new theory to see and acknowledge its superiority. It is somewhere observed that the *Iliad* of Homer, from the active scenes it exhibits, affords proof of being written when its great master's mind was in its meridian splendour ; whereas, the less vigorous scenes of the *Odyssey*, and their frequent relation to the past, afford evidence of being written at a more advanced period of life : and did no other means exist to prove which of the two great poems was produced first, this would be no vague criterion by which to judge of the priority of one to the other.

Memory is the most uncontrollable element of the mind ;

it is a power whose agency we can never resist. We can close our eyes against any object that may be present; we can shut our ears against any sounds we may deem discordant; and, under all ordinary circumstances, we have the option of transferring the reflecting faculties from one subject to another; but memory is not so strictly at our command. We can determine when to set about any laborious intellectual task, requiring all the thought and ingenuity we can command; but memory, with its unbidden and often unwelcome visitings, will intrude upon our severest studies. It waits not always for us to retire to the silent shade, nor when we wander abroad in the thoughtful twilight of evening; it waits not always for the leisure hour, when we seek repose and wantonly revel amongst the visions of the past; it will utter its teachings, be they good or ill, amid the bustle of day, or in the still hour of midnight; when we toil, or when we rest: it comes to us when it wills, and we cannot exclude its visits, nor say, as to a friend, when in haste—Farewell.

To establish a difference between what is commonly termed reasoning and reflecting would be difficult; with this exception only, that reflection has more reference to the past, whilst reasoning is more active and relates more to the present and future. What is frequently termed reflecting on the past, is simply a reproduction in the mind of past feelings and events, which resolves itself into a pure act of the memory. If reason or reflection is engaged with the past, it is in tracing its consequences, in drawing inferences therefrom, or in eliciting facts without which no new principles could be formed on past results; but memory, on the other hand, can retrace the past without the aid of reason. When the toils and fatigues of the day are over, who does not love, occasionally, to indulge in a review of by-gone years? No

toil, no perplexity attends it. It is an exercise we reserve for an idle hour. In summer, we may repose beneath the shade of a favourite tree, and whilst we recall the adventures of childhood, enjoy, at the same time, the surrounding scenery. In winter, we may seat ourselves beside the blazing hearth, and whilst we recount many a past deed, we can, at the same time, enjoy our fireside security and feel alive to the present; but in this the mind is at ease—no labour of the intellect, no perplexity attends it. Memory is the most independent faculty of the human mind, because its office is simply to reproduce what reason has dictated and habit confirmed, whilst every other department of the mind is equally as dependent on memory for the exercise of its powers. If we are engaged in contemplating the wonders of nature, memory accompanies us, to bring to our assistance a thousand absent objects, which have before been themes of the highest admiration. If imagination soars aloft in its own unconfined dominions, investing all it beholds with its own fairy colours, memory is again called into exercise, to bring to its aid a thousand past dreams of unreal things; a thousand previous sentiments of sweet illusion and ideal delight. If the mind is engaged on any difficult or abstruse subject, requiring all the subtlety and acuteness of which it is capable; even then, memory goes before, to assist it in connecting past results with present experiments, in comparing all known similarity of past intellectual exercises, in reviewing every relative question, and every known source of investigation.

Not only does memory preserve to us a knowledge of past events, but renews again the identical feelings which the events originally produced; still, in recalling any distant occurrence, it will depend much on circumstances, as to the force and extent with which it will be accompanied by contemporary condition of mind. Those

transactions to which we attach the highest importance will be most connected with the particular sentiments and feelings which originated with the transactions, although much will still depend on time and place. An occurrence which took place at sunset can never again be so vividly portrayed as at that exact time, although place and surrounding objects should favour the attempt ; nor can it be so powerfully recalled when time is favourable, unless place and surrounding objects render their assistance. A soldier wounded in the valley of Moscow, or on the plains of Waterloo, and left for hours weltering in his blood, if conveyed to the exact spot where he received his wound, might not be greatly affected, because corresponding objects would be wanting. The roar of cannon, the hissing of shot, the trampling of horses, the groans of the dying, and the terrific carnage on all sides, would not be present to complete the scene ; but if it were possible to convey him to the same spot, and surround him with the same scene of horror, his sufferings would be again renewed, his long-healed wound would re-open and throb with pain.

The exercise of memory is more or less favoured by seasons of the year and peculiar conditions of atmosphere. In spring, I would prefer the hour of sunrise, when a warm bright day is promised after a long-continued series of cold and storm, and the first general burst of joy from hill and dale announces the resurrection of nature from the tomb of her repose. In summer, I would prefer the lingering twilight of evening, when the song of birds has ceased, and the noisy beetle is winging its rapid flight through the fragrant air. In autumn, I would prefer the hour of noon ; one of those melancholy hours, when scarcely a breath disturbs the tranquillity of the dying year, and the beech-leaves, grown lovely in their decay, are one by one dropping silently to the

earth. In winter, I would prefer the clear, calm night, when the full-orbed moon is smiling through the leafless trees, and the village bells are ushering in the season of mirth.

Memory marks not alone the most important and deeply-interesting portions of the past, but, if cherished, will again bring to view many common and trivial incidents, which the mind scarcely wishes to retain. When travelling over some tract of country we have never before seen, many buildings and objects, from their imposing or rare appearance, have fastened themselves upon the mind's vision, and been faithfully portrayed again and again; but the impressions did not begin and end with the gorgeous and beautiful. The unadorned and unadmired, the un-looked for and the unheeded—things so little noticed and so little loved, that the eye beheld them only as it looked around for something on which to fix a momentary gaze—even these have revived in the retrospect, as distinct parts of the same scene. We have met with the stranger whose demeanour and conversation have riveted the attention and excited admiration. We have parted from him with regret, and memory has treasured up, not only the conversation of the hour, but has pencilled the features of the stranger to the distinctness of life. Still, these impressions, though most prominent, are not all we gather from the hurried scene. There may have been one, whose features but once seen, whose momentary glance but once caught, and whose voice we never heard, whose form again approaches us as a reality, and we attempt to fathom the thoughts even of the unknown. It is well that man is not always attracted towards that which appears most to merit his attention. It is well when the garden of earth invites his search, that he can sometimes overlook the brilliant and attractive to find in the

shaded recess the modest flower, which pines away its existence beneath the poisonous shade of some gorgeous tree. It is well that man is not always attracted toward the wealthy and great, that he finds his sympathies moving toward the humbler sons of earth, in whom he finds the kindest affections, the purest benevolence, the noblest virtues.

Oh, Memory! how friendly art thou to the friendless; for who, in his brief span of existence, passed even in the most vigorous and chilling regions of earth's varying climes, but has sometimes quaffed life's exhilarating draughts,—but has sometimes sipped of the stream of earthly blessedness,—but has sometimes, amid the raging storm, hopefully pursued the far-off beacon, guiding to the harbour of a peaceful shore. Who would not thus cherish the past? Careless and happy days that have been, let me recall them. Brief and bright hours; fleecy and evanescent clouds, mocking occasionally the lowering and blackened visage of a stormy sky; twinkling stars, casting a momentary gaze from heaven to earth, let me again behold them. Brightness of the gaudy-crimsoned morning, let me again see thy promise. Song of the mid-winter day, let me again hear thy notes of rejoicing. Guide me, Memory, to some hallowed spot; cull from oblivion some happy hour; if thou canst, restore me to some bosom friend; go to the solitary churchyard, and call from their graves the forms that have perished, and give them new life. Call back hoary Time to retrace his steps; implore the spirit of change to stay its onward march and reverse its course.

Memory is the storehouse of the mind,
Where all its most imperishable things
Are kept for future service. 'Tis the mint
Where mental ore receives enduring form,
And takes its standard value from its weight.

A spacious mirror in that storehouse hangs,
Whence all is well reflected. It is there
The tyrant sees the lordling at his feet
Imploring pardon, and his abject slaves
Waiting alone his nod to do his will.
'Tis there the meagre, pale-faced miser sees
His glittering gold ; but he is ever poor,
Because he reaps no joy from what he has,
And only knows that room is left for more.
'Tis in that truthful glass the traitor sees
The faithful image of his murdered friend ;
But not more frightful looks that bleeding ghost,
To him who dealt the wound than his own self,—
So hideous grown, that even his shadow shows
A phantom upon which he dare not gaze.
Ah ! poor indeed is he who cannot look
Into his own mind's mirror, but must start
And shudder at his own distorted form.

THE VILLAGE FESTIVAL.

IN most of the rural districts of England, each village of importance has its Benefit Society, composed mostly of agricultural labourers, and once in the year the members meet to commemorate its formation, and enjoy themselves as they best may. A suitable room, called the club-room, is provided for the occasion, which is decorated, in some instances, very tastefully with evergreens, branches of oak, clusters of laburnum, lilac, and whatever besides of the gay and beautiful the season may produce. Most of these festivals are commemorated at Whitsuntide; and it sometimes happens, when the festive period comes early, and vegetation is late, both extremes operate so unfavourably as to preclude the possibility of suspending the gifts of spring in the halls of feasting and song, and, as now and then occurs with the May-day garlands, there is a sadness in the effort at variance with the occasion.

We will not join those who consider the village festivities an unnecessary adjunct to the leading object of the society,—that of providing by forethought and economy for a period of sickness,—although it is very desirable for the welfare of such institutions that the wealthier classes should contribute their support on such occasions, to prevent the members sustaining pecuniary loss. To show the influence of periodical festivities, we need not call to our aid the mighty gatherings of the human race, such as were witnessed in Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost;

at the celebration of the Olympic games ; or at the carnivals of modern Europe. We need not call to our aid the great annual meetings which take place in merry England,—in her races and fairs, and other gatherings of the multitude. The rural meetings in our villages and hamlets at Whitsuntide, termed club-feasts, will answer every purpose ; for it is not with the vastness of the assembly we have to do, so much as with the individual feelings which annually recurring events are calculated to excite. A glorious season, truly, is that of merry old Christmas for linking anew family ties, and riveting the bonds of friendship. But at that chilling period of the year, when nature seals up her golden treasures in the frozen earth, imagination cannot wing itself into those blessed regions of the past to which we soar in the warm days of spring, when the earth is clothed in budding and blooming beauty.

Brilliant, sometimes, is the May morning that ushers in our village festival. Soon after the day has dawned, the labourer is at his work, toiling cheerfully to prevent any undue loss of time ; whilst the matron, much earlier than usual, is aroused from her slumbers by the noise and gossip of children, anxious to be dressed in their holiday suit. Oh ! what a happy age is that, when the young heart is so overflowing with joy and expectation as to scare away the pure sleep of childhood—when the soul is so big with joy that repose and quiet are unfelt conditions of blessedness. To define these enjoyments would be a task beyond the philosopher's reach, and we can only know that nature has mysteriously combined with the young heart's pulsation feelings of joy and hope, unfathomable, yet inconceivably delicious. It is hope without experience, ever picturing to the dawning fancy a bright and sunny future—drawing life onward step by step, till some fatal point is gained which leaves present



and future, affording but a dreary contrast to the blissful memories of the past.

Early in the day the sturdy sons and ruddy daughters of the peasantry make their appearance, some of whom have travelled many a mile, although but a few hours are allotted them for the occasion. Sister friends long since parted meet in happy groups, and on tiptoe discuss their projects for the day; whilst the young men are equally busied in making similar arrangements. In the club-room all is bustle and preparation, as the members come pouring in, some from near and some from afar. What with recognition of old acquaintance, and greeting and shaking of hands, it becomes a scene worthy the pencil of Hogarth. What a band of old and well-known faces again confront each other, reviving memories of by-gone days, and the friendships and pastimes of boyhood. A glorious sight to behold is even this temporary elevation of humanity—this cessation from the ordinary toils of life—the human being, for once in the year, emerged from the dirt and turmoil of his daily vocation, and grown at once into a social, joyous, and recreative existence.

The great attraction of the day, the band, is at length announced, and as it strikes up some martial air, see, at the first sound, how those happy girls bound and leap. It is a moment of sweet delirium, when they seem to have forgotten themselves, and, in the ecstasy of thrilling joy, awakened to a new life. See how their steps keep time to the measured movement. What a scene is this for the philosophic observer, to behold these village maidens, all gaiety, and joy, and hope, and contrast it with their future probable histories, when the blooming, thoughtless girl shall have merged into the thoughtful, careworn mother. A glorious period is the present, illumined with the sympathies and affections that make

the darkest days cloudless and serene, when the young heart is inspired with dreams of future bliss, and sees not the dark clouds as they gather in the far horizon, ready to be wafted onward by the first rising storm.

The village soon becomes a scene of excitement, the toy-stalls, the swinging-car, and other attractions, have drawn together groups of happy children. The bells are chiming sweetly as on the Sabbath morning, and how vividly do their hallowing tones bring home to many a long-absent native of the place the recollection of those blissful days when the same sound ushered in the wished-for day of rest. There is in this festival a feature most heartily to be welcomed in an age not always recognizing the sacredness of human joys and social mirth. This happy meeting of men and families is sanctioned by the pastor of the village, and accepted as an occasion to exercise the sacred duties of his office. He heads the gay procession, and thus, both by his presence and profession, acknowledges the right and duty of social rejoicings. It is commonly affirmed that a religious service is incompatible with festive occasions. Does it then amount to this—that religion is only useful or needed in a time of adversity or peril—that it is adapted only to the recluse or ascetic, or those only who can shut out the world, and elevate themselves above its varying wants and concerns? Verily, what a wretched religion would this be, acting only upon the miserable, joyless portions of existence! Surely the heart's warm joy and affection utter the praises of God as vividly as the moanings and repinings of a disconsolate spirit. If the bright and sunny hours of life feel not the presence of an all-pervading Deity, how can we expect the blessings of an unbroken faith amid its darkest scenes? The religious idea is too much divided and subdivided, and the rites and ceremonies which in far-distant ages were the only

witnesses of its existence, have now, amongst the nations of the earth, assumed new and higher forms, and there is developed an internal connection with external rites ; but still is the religious idea very universally embodied in outward signs, and where it is not so, place, time, and occasion are received as the signal manifestations of its presence. We do not, by these remarks, infer that public acts of devotion are unnecessary adjuncts of religion, or that they are not proofs of its growth and development ; but we cannot so narrowly divide its uniform and daily influence from what is only occasional. We cannot admit that the entire efficacy of religion is reserved for periods of extraordinary visitation, for a period only of trouble, of bereavement, of suffering, of death. This would be to make life, with its infant joys, its happy childhood, its youthful anticipations, its dawning and boundless affections, its genius, its industry, its every pursuit in the varied stages of existence, only subservient to the more remote and dreary scenes of sorrow and suffering—scenes which to some may for ever be unknown, in which instances life must be left without the means of exercising the highest functions for which it was bestowed ; an assumption at once unnatural and illogical. No ; religion is not bequeathed only to brighten the dark season of adversity—it is equally adapted to heighten the enjoyments of prosperity ; to shed a lustre over the heyday of happiness, and to follow humanity into all the recesses of its chequered lot. What fervour, what devotion, what gratitude is so pure, so heart-felt, as that which rises from the bosom of youth, when, in the ecstasy of newly-expanded life, it feels the reality of an existence fresh from the hands of its Creator ; or when the first feelings of love, taking possession of the soul, make every place sacred, and every human being a friend ? When heaven and earth most resemble each

other is when the soul beams with love too great for self-endurance, and, radiant with its own overpowering force, essays to blend with its own the spiritual sensibilities of kindred spirits.

The influences of nature, the sublimity of poetry, and the spirituality of the affections, all form parts of the religion of life. Nature has expressions, so allied to the soul's higher wants, that we cannot gaze upon her without sensations of joyful emotion. We feel her influence to be a growing divinity within us, to whom, on the altar of her holiest solitudes, we offer perpetual worship. The humblest flower that opens its leaves to the morning sun, with the glittering dewdrop, pure as the tear of the penitent, suspended on its silken edge, is a mystery that forces the observing admirer to do homage to the great unseen Power whose will is nature's guide. Those serene, snowy clouds, in endless succession majestically traversing the heavens in untiring constancy, and assuming, as they pass onward, new and ever-varied forms, in their very silence, though in language mysterious and unfathomable, speak to us of the Most High. When the expiring day, softening into twilight, conceals from the sight far-off objects, and the distant spire becomes obscured in the grey rising mist, and the first star looks lovingly on the coming night, how strongly, deeply, does the soul then expand into a fervent religious awe. There is a communication between the senses and the soul, between the corporeal and immaterial, which the improvement of ages, the growth of knowledge, the triumphs of science, will never explain. It lies concealed in the unfathomable depths of nature—it is shrouded in the elements of Deity, and is too far in advance of human discovery to be explained but by a revelation to the soul, which admits not of a communicative process allied to the ordinary gifts of humanity.

We feel the influence of nature and the influence of poetry to be the influence of religion. They have all one uniform tendency, which is to consecrate what is common, both in thought and action, to nobler and higher purposes; to endow it with holier feelings, and to build up from fragments of the imagination, which in their undefinable nature seem to elude the grasp, a spiritual temple lighted with an undying and effulgent blaze of living light.

The influences of nature, and the teachings of poetry, are stamped with a divine character; but it is more in the religion of the affections that we trace the connexion of festive occasions with the obligation of human ties. There is a communion sometimes between congenial spirits, that will bear a more refined name than friendship. Human and mortal though it be, yet there is in it sometimes such an unbroken, unshaken faith in each other—such a mingling of kindred associations and harmonies—such an enthusiastic communion of soul—the thoughts and feelings so etherealized, that sounds, as it were, from the distant spheres take possession of the senses, and we awaken from the divine delirium as from a dream. And what more calculated to heighten and expand the noblest instincts of our nature, than the social gathering of festive occasions? It is on these periodical occurrences that the mind rushes back through long intervening spaces of time, and brings back bright memorials of the past from scenes which time had rendered languid; and whilst all intermediate space and scenes may be forgotten, the early impression of friends, and scenes, and localities, grows up amidst the excitement, with all the freshness of which the imagination is capable. How often does some trivial accident throw in our path the remembrance of an old friend—it may be the sight of a flower, or the fragrance wafted from the field—it may be the sight of a

house, a garden, a picture, or a visit to some once-frequented spot, from which rise up some long-buried forms. How mingled with high and holy thoughts the vision of that revisited spot, where in childhood we wandered with early companions amidst embowering hedgerows enrapt in our dearest dreams of bliss, and talked of phantom shapes that haunted the hollow glen, and mused and philosophized on subjects which delighted our untutored fancies. The paternal home looks unchanged—the garden also looks as of old, the summer arbour is still there, and the same shrubs form its covering. The old russeting still retains its place, and the same herbs flourish beneath its shade, and all within, how much as in years past. The well-tended geranium still ranged on the window-frame—the same pictures hanging on the walls—the same old-fashioned ornaments on the shelf—the same pile of books on the cupboard; and there still is the old family circle—the aged father and mother, brothers and sisters, and friends, are grouped round the hearth—old and well-known voices again become audible—looks, so long mirrored in the glass of memory, meet the anxious eye; and thoughts and feelings, that have often slumbered, awaken to a new and mysterious life. Who knows but these occasional flashes of memory,—these fitful revisitings which baffle the material senses,—may be the first links in some great chain of causes destined to bind together the present and a future state of being? By some strange law of mind, the past survives the wreck of time, not only through history and tradition registering passing events, but by some individual, organic process of the intellect, which now and then mysteriously opens up visions of the past, as though to redeem from oblivion thoughts and feelings which, otherwise mortal, may, by the force of memory, become bound up with the soul's immortality,

and, unlike the marble monuments raised to perpetuate the dead, which crumble with accumulated years, may grow and expand with the duration of existence.

If festive scenes are chargeable with producing evils, they are far more powerful for good. True, they may sometimes be the occasion of inebriety and disorder, but they are not unbalanced evils. Their harmonizing and humanizing influences far exceed the temporary evils which scenes of gaiety and excitement sometimes produce. The feeling excited by the presence of a gay crowd, amidst waving banners and gorgeous emblazonry, pealing bells and deafening music, is not always so joyous as the scene betokens. There is often a tendency in one extreme to produce its antipodes, and the mind, elated to undue joyousness, is frequently, in the midst of hilarity, led to look soberly on the opposite picture of life, almost mingling tears with smiles. How often at our village festival do we see visitors to their native home strolling thoughtfully round the churchyard. What an indescribable train of ideas may there rush upon the mind? At a short distance all is gaiety and enjoyment, children in their holiday apparel roaming about in happy groups—the young, the beautiful, luxuriating in the gay scene, and measuring with graceful steps the music that precedes their path. How that thrilling strain revives the recollection of former years; and that merry laugh and those frequent shouts from the happy throng, how they speak of other days,—yet here beneath the sod how quiet all! In these sepulchral cells are old friends, numbered with the generations gone, who not long since figured in this annual event, enjoying the mirth and reciprocating the blessings of friendship and love. What spot, what occasion, better calculated for contemplating and solving the great questions of life, in thus linking its brightest aspects with the sadness and solemnity of the grave?

SUNDAY MORNING MUSINGS.

SLEEPING and waking—what insignificant commonplace words they seem; yet, in reality, how big with meaning! In the history of man, they constitute his life and death; for what is that portion of existence we call sleep, but a temporary death?—if not that, it is the cessation of intellectual life. This eclipse of mental day takes place so often, that we scarcely heed its coming and going. Too often ungrateful for renewed existence, we shake off the slumbers of night as unconcernedly as though we had never lost the thread of our being, and we resume anew the acts of life every morning as though we had undergone no change since the twilight thought of yesterday died away. The happy night, indeed, wish that life, thought, hope, enjoyment, had no cessation—that amusements never ceased to interest—that toil never produced fatigue—that the sun which irradiates the earth might never set; but to how many miserable creatures is the loss of consciousness of life Heaven's greatest boon! How many thousands are there, so helpless in their wretchedness,—with so little to hope for—so little to live for,—that they would gladly lie down and sleep to wake no more! Overborne with toil, or worn out by suffering, the few hours' sleep which overtaxed nature craves constitutes the only relief which life affords. How many are there who, for their own sakes alone—were there no others to suffer for their rashness,—would gladly minister to their own destruction;—but, selfish as the world may be in many of its

aspects, it is not without numerous instances of self-sacrifice, and noble acts of patient endurance. The great gulf which still separates Christians and Christianity is not all a vacuum: here and there, in this vast space, a verdant hillock stands out in bold relief, to gladden the eye with its resplendent foliage.

As the morning's returning consciousness gently dispels the illusion of night, and we begin to take a rapid glance of what most immediately interests us, one of the first efforts of the mind is to identify the day of the week, and take a survey of its demands. As the faithful monitor within utters forth the claims of the day, it now and then whispers to us, in gentler tones than usual, that it is the Sabbath morning, and we hail the new-born tidings with joyful hearts. What a pure enjoyment is there in sallying out on a fine Sunday morning! The village, instead of presenting the usual scene of preparation for toil, wears an aspect of soothing quietude. The musical chiming of the bells gives a holy zest to the feelings, and mingles, in sweet accord, things past and present. Here and there the cottager is seen returning from his garden, with a basket of vegetables, the reward of his evenings' labour. But, withal, who possesses a more patient spirit, or exercises more self-denial, than the village peasant who exercises habits of industry and sobriety? See his children, with books in their hands, pursuing their way to the Sunday-school; how clean—how neatly clad; from the well-blackened shoe to the trim bonnet or cap, every item is carefully arranged; but at how great a sacrifice must all this be effected—with how much caution, and with what an exact doling out to each one the apportioned share of the day's supply!

Amidst all life's contrasts and anxieties the Sabbath is still a boon, and not the least one to him who toils for his daily bread. Who is there so irreligious, who so

opposed to all ceremonious institutions, to all devout exercises of pious and grateful thought, to all peaceful retirement, to all innocent recreation, as to breathe a word, or bosom a thought, unfavourable to the existence of this day of universal leisure and repose? Be we orthodox or heterodox, it should be joyfully hailed as a day for high and holy communion with all that is sacred and good, with all that is pure and lovely. It should be met with pure thankfulness and rejoicing, because it liberates both body and mind from the thralldom of incessant toil, and restores to man the liberty which is the essential dignity of his nature. On this day there seems everywhere to exist a pervading spirit of quiet and repose, as though all nature attuned her harmony to the expanding sympathies of the heart. The winds whisper with unusual softness, the flowers breathe their richest odours, the verdure assumes its deepest dye. We do not always perceive things as they are. Nature is a revelation, requiring a spirit of inspiration to fathom out her mysterious utterings. The Sabbath aids in producing this power of perception. The sordid pursuits even of the most avaricious are partly suspended, the turmoil of laborious life has for a short time ceased, the intellectual faculties are awakened, as from a slumber, the old stony pathway of life is deserted, and a new track is formed, surrounded with new and interesting scenery. The stern demands of life have vanished, and the confined emotions of the heart, like a bird escaped from long imprisonment, dart away into unlimited space. The privileged and hallowed character of the Sabbath does not always attract those who have leisure to the sanctuary of prayer and praise, for all hearts have not the same requirements for consolatory aid; and where it is equally needed, it is not always to be obtained through the same medium. Let those who bow the

knee in grateful acknowledgment of divine goodness, and who supplicate the Most High for spiritual blessings, experience all the internal peace and hope they need ; but let not those who worship God in temples made with hands, refuse to others the privilege of studying the revealed will of Heaven as it is made known in the outward creation. The fervour of devotion may rise from the bosom of the true worshipper as ardently when he wanders alone in the secluded field, as when mingling his prayers and praises with a thousand hearts and voices. It is in vain that we attempt to set up infallible landmarks for the mind. Simple truisms lose their efficacy if not established by the action of counteracting agents. Antagonistic powers form the best foundation on which to erect every social edifice. A principle, like an army, must be opposed on the battle-field, and its strength proved, before it can conquer. All great results in art, in science, in politics, and in morals, proceed from composite causes. As in music no true harmony can be originated without the introduction of discords, and still less without perpetual changes and combinations, neither can society become one harmonious compact without apparent disagreements and discrepancies in its several parts. In chemistry, the most important substance left to itself produces no perceptible result ; but place it in contact with an opposite power, and it will almost work a miracle. So is it in morals—we cannot, by the exercise of any one virtue, produce a general good. Simple benevolence, by an indiscriminate distribution of charity, aids but little in the cause of human progress ; but, combined with intelligence and devotedness of purpose, it will do much. We cannot, by the suppression of any one vice, reform society. All causes are combinations. The causes which produce one vice, produce others ; to bring about, therefore, great ends, we must apply exten-

sive means. As in morals, so is it in religion : its existence is not centred in any theory or particular mode of faith ;—it is a spiritual agency, as diffuse in its operation as human existence is variable in its requirements ; it is a principle which every intelligent being may apply to his own life—which he may incorporate with his own spirit. As it approaches nearer the completion of its great end, will it become gradually less sectarian in its outward form, and at length exist as a constituent element in the constitution of the mind. The innate and universal perception of the Deity by all the various races of intellectual beings, places the first and fundamental principle of religion on a firmer basis than would any simple and uniform mode of recognizing a first cause. Through whatever medium the Deity is perceived—whether seen and worshipped in the sun, moon, and stars ; or whether, like the Indian,—

“ Whose untutored mind,
Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind ; ”

or whether, in a more refined sense, the Deity becomes to us an ever-abiding presence, “ in whom we live and move,” it is through an endless variety of contradictory modes of belief and conflicting opinions, that we deduce the surest proof of this great fact. So will the moral and intellectual progress of society pursue its devious windings ; and although some detached portions of the general good may, like the river, in fertilizing the earth, follow a separate and unbroken course ; yet, like these diversified and scattered streams, conveying their waters to the ocean, will the various channels through which human improvement is conducted, be found pursuing their onward path towards one common centre.

THE BLESSINGS OF SLEEP.

MAN is placed in a position which subjects him to the influence of two separate controlling agencies—nature and society. All the principles which govern his thoughts and actions result from these, either alone or combined. Nature gives him an organic life, furnishes him with corporeal faculties, and endows him with reason. In the first stages of existence, there is no perceptible dissimilarity between the prince-born infant and the offspring of the peasant. It is only as these germs of existence progress onward, that we can discover the ever-varying features, forms, habits, propensities, and equally varied moral and intellectual endowments, which constitute that unmistakable individuality separating each being from all others.

Leaving out those occasional organic defects which nature in all forms of animal life exhibits, being exceptions to the ordinary rules which govern the principle of life, the natural endowments of the human species are the same in all, differing only in degree. All have the organs of sight, of hearing, of taste, of feeling, and a capacity for reflection. It matters not whether it may be a power of thought to furnish the world with a Newton, or whether sufficient only to act as a guide in the most humble department of social life. There is enough intellect in the lowest grade of existence to rank both extremes in the same class, as distinctly as we place in

the same species the fir, stunted and sickening in some stony earthless dell, with those that crown in matchless beauty the snow-clad hills of Norway and Sweden.

Nature is ever bounteous, and bestows her greatest and most needed blessings alike on all, however her purposes may be temporarily, and in detail, frustrated by the laws which govern society. The elements that surround the thatched roof of the cottage are the same as those which encircle the battlements of the towering palace. But look into those dark alleys in the densely-peopled city—those dens that intersect almost every locality of the huge metropolis. So narrow is the entrance, that, like the path to some secret rendezvous through a subterraneous entrance, two cannot traverse it side by side; whilst masses of lofty buildings on all hands render these abodes of human beings as impervious to the rays of the sun as the den of ancient banditti. See those children in the court; how ragged, dirty, pale, and emaciated they appear. Surrounded by an atmosphere which comes not from on high, as does the pure light of heaven on the flower-enamelled field, but polluted with vapours effluxed from all that is unsightly and impure; what wonder this should be the abode of sickness and fever; that helpless babes and children should perish in the bud of existence, in a ratio unknown where the light and health-inspiring breath of heaven uninterruptedly descend to earth. This huge mortality in the entrance to life is not God's work, nor is it destiny, meaning God in another form. Human laws are too often opposed to the divine, and will so continue, till the unclouded light of intellect shall have framed human institutions on the broader basis of nature's universal laws; yet, despite all human imperfections, nature's dictates can be but imperfectly frustrated. So benevolent are they, that notwithstanding the deformities of social life, they rise above all ob-

structions, and assert an indisputable claim in executing their high and benign commission.

One of these prominent blessings, which no laws, no contingencies can annihilate, is sleep. It is the precious endowment bequeathed to all forms of sentient existence, blessing all, and cursing none. It answers purposes valuable alike in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity. In every form misery assumes, nature administers this precious balm. See that careworn traveller, wandering through the village at eventide, with feeble voice asking alms. He perhaps was once happy, blest with a home, surrounded by friends, loved and caressed. How sad a fall is that for man. It is a height from which all the fallen do not fall, for there are some of the world's scorned and neglected ones who never felt the warmth of human kindness—whose parents died ere thoughts were formed—who were left in the wide world unprotected and uncared for, and whose childhood was as unblest as their riper years. Then does the world's scorn lose half its bitterness, because faith in man has never grown and flourished—no friends have been tried, and found flying like a shadow at the touch of adversity. But here is a soul, alive to sorrow and remorse, wandering about unprovided with a shelter for the coming night. Every form that crosses his path seems to mock and despise him. Happy children, busied with their frolics and revelling in happiness and shouting with joy, awaken in his mind a thousand recollections of by-gone days, when he, too, had boon companions, and bright hopes, and an undimmed future. He sits down on the tufted bank and listens thoughtfully to the hum of merriment, and the jocund peals of laughter, and pictures again the scenes of his happy boyhood—the evening pastimes—the open-hearted friends, and the happy home that awaited him, when the shadows of night told of the swiftness of hours happily

spent. Amid such recollections he rises from his resting-place, and his own position, wretched and penniless, again confronts his consciousness and confounds his reason, and he wanders on with no better wish than to perish from the earth; but memory must yet drink down another bitter draught. He meets the happy village couple, full of joy, and love, and hope; and memory, as though in very mockery, pictures to him again the time when he, too, loved, and was beloved. Then the very thought of life becomes burdensome, and, hurrying to the nearest hovel, with agonizing reflections, he sinks down on his litter of straw. But Heaven has yet a boon for misery, nor from the wretched takes away the balm of sleep.

It is midnight, and the setting moon sheds her feeble rays on the dark waves of the Thames, as they glide noiselessly on beneath the huge buildings of the mighty metropolis. Watch that restless figure, with hurried step, pacing the water-side. Partly intoxicated with spirits, but more deeply intoxicated with deep draughts of wretchedness, she occasionally stands hesitating whether or not to take that fearful leap which shall stop for ever the beating pulse—the throbbing brain—the aching heart. Perhaps there rises before her the image of one who loves her, and of one she loves, and that form beckons her beseechingly to come away. How many, like this poor disconsolate girl, would have committed the rash act, but for the recollection of one who still feels for the wretched and the unforgiven. The thought of one commiserating heart still left her in the world checks the presumptuous thought, and prompts the poor outcast to turn her steps once more in quest of a shelter. On that bed of rags, where all around is desolate and loathsome, and human sympathy stands aloof, Heaven's benignant messenger fears not to come; and waving his gentle wand, in mercy seals up awhile the book of life, and on the stormy ocean bids the waves be still.

There is no grief so deep-rooted, no suffering so acute, but the universal blessing of sleep can relieve. Even the wretched, brutalized slave, bent down with incessant toil, living only to feed the avarice, or perhaps to minister to the yet deeper crimes of some reckless tyrant, is not forgotten in the distribution of this precious endowment. Without this boon, in vain would cruelty and extortion, in their worst forms, wring from the slave his daily toil. In vain would the dealer in human blood lash and goad his victims, did he attempt to stay this benign visitor.

In man's greatest extremities, in his hour of deepest need, how often does Heaven interpose and claim a cessation from misery. Pain, excruciating and intense, may fall to his lot, but endurance has its universal limits; the senses must perish, or sleep must end the fearful combat; coming like a deliverer—as a calm succeeding a storm, or the boisterous tide receding from the shore. What a vast amount of suffering, physical and mental, is suspended by sleep. Shipwrecked travellers on the wide world of waters, whose waking thoughts are only those of despair,—who have looked on the foaming deep and on death as already nigh,—who have frantically uttered adieus to far-off friends,—even to these, tempest-tossed in their leaky and shattered bark, nature still claims her great boon, and shuts out occasionally the noise of the angry billows.

Conscience, most terrible when dark and dreadful secrets roam through the troubled soul—groping in darkness that may be felt, even when the bright sun fills the earth with joy and gladness,—even this restless monitor is allowed a respite from its untold toil; and the gnawing worm awhile lies dormant, as though tired of its daily task. Enter the condemned convict's cell at midnight—even his last midnight. Steal softly to the couch of that doomed one, as he sleeps his last earthly

sleep. What untold agony is suspended in that blessed unconsciousness! The prison clock has announced the morning's first hour, but he still sleeps. The warning voice of time again and again speaks out, but he wakes not yet. Without, there is a hum of many voices, and a perpetual noise of footsteps—it is the approach of mortals more sleepless than the murderer, gathering to witness his disgrace and agony. How the crowd thickens. The noise grows louder and louder, and jesting and vulgar joy have pervaded the dense mass, yet still the poor helpless sinner sleeps, and the broad light of day has penetrated his cell ere he awakes for the last time to ponder over the future.

THE CHURCHYARD.*

WHAT a dark, solitary place is the grave. Even with children, whose buoyant, inexperienced senses scarcely tell them what death is, or why the dead are laid in such lonesome places, the grave is a subject for sad thoughts. As the village sexton, with spade and pickaxe, toils to make a final resting-place for his neighbour, happy children gather round him, and, foregoing their customary play, they stand seriously gazing upon the earth as it is scattered over the turf, wondering, perchance, what causes layer after layer of black mould to contrast so strangely with the bright soil that ordinarily mingles with the sombre pile. How little deem they, that their forgotten forefathers, once living and toiling, the busy actors upon the stage of life, have shrunk into a handful of black earth, leaving no vestige of feature or form, nor yet a remnant of the last garb that habited them when consigned to that desolate place. The vault, too; what a gloom pervades that damp, mouldy recess. What a mournful echo it gives back to every sound. Coffins piled upon each other, as time rolls on, fall asunder, and become a confused heap of bones and dust. The inmates of that gloomy chamber, who once surrounded the family hearth, bound together

* This Essay was written before the burial-grounds in our cities and large towns were closed, but the remarks are still equally applicable to our small towns and villages.

by filial affection, or, it may be, divided by petty strifes, there rest quietly, side by side. Year after year rolls on without an interruption to the stern silence within, unless it be the heavy hammering of the doorkeeper, come to announce the arrival of a new tenant. How strange it seems, that father and mother, brother and sister, those who have braved the dangers of the ocean and endured the severest hardships to meet each other, when thus congregated, should have no power to give utterance to words—though pillowed on each other's bosom, they speak not, they whisper not.

What a variety of associations are called into existence by the word "churchyard." On whatever occasion it is uttered, or however incidentally the expression may have been used, there is often an effect produced which we cannot resist. An involuntary, an irresistible sensation succeeds. It calls away the roving imagination from its voluptuous revellings, cuts short its colouring of romance, and sobers it down to the contemplation of realities. And why this strange effect? Does it waken the recollection of some loved one, whom we may have followed there, or is it that we feel with keener force that it is our final resting-place? So little do we know of the invisible future, that we cannot, with the strongest effort of the imagination, form an idea of the mode of existence that is to succeed this; and we cling with unceasing adherence to visible and material life. So closely are the bodily and spiritual allied, that it is only through the former we can imbibe the latter. It is the prevalence of this sentiment that has ever attached importance, and not always undue importance, to the outward aids that have been deemed essential to spiritual life. We cannot, in thinking of the churchyard, dismiss from our minds the conviction that we have there something related to our own being; we cannot soar beyond its boundaries

with sufficient perspicuity to convince ourselves that nothing but the frail tenement is there; and we still cling with unabating fondness to mortality, and endow its frail remains with new vitality. None, surely, could wish the sentiment of death to be constantly present, drying up the sources of earthly comfort; lessening the usefulness, and abating the interest, of individual existence. No; life has in its general history, and in its common occurrences, enough to preclude a redundancy of enjoyment—enough sorrow to stem the tide of joy—enough rolling billows to prevent a tedious calm—enough disappointment at all times to make happiness insecure; but when we must feel, when we must suffer, let us apply the best balm of which we know. Let not the tear that would afford relief be stopped in its course; let it not, when formed, retreat to its hiding-place, and carry back to the soul the very grief it was intended to alleviate.

Every one must have observed the very exposed situation of most of our village churchyards. Frequently they are crossed by two or three footpaths, and surrounded with houses on all sides; in many instances, the cottages form a large portion of the boundary itself. Such places are, of all others, least suited to call grief into existence. When sorrow most keenly pervades the heart, is when memory is most occupied with the past, conjuring up vivid pictures of by-gone days, renewing scenes that have long passed away, and placing departed existence again on the theatre of life; but for such solemn exercises, how unsuited is the churchyard. When lately passing through one of these public burial-grounds, I observed, at a short distance, habited in deep mourning, a female figure, motionless as the stone on which she was leaning. I hesitated to proceed, for I observed that it was the attitude of sorrow, and that she was

paying a sad tribute to the memory of a departed spirit. As I approached nearer, I could discern features strongly marked with grief, and wearing the impress of deep mental suffering. I passed on slowly and quietly as I could, unwilling to rob so angelic a form of her communion with the past; but, on my nearer approach, she started as from a dream. Her first effort was to discover some path by which she might avert the gaze of a stranger, for her face was wet with tears, and with a hurried and confused step she stole away in an opposite direction. My conscience smote me that I had allowed myself to interrupt so sacred a reverie, and thus extinguish the flames of the altar on which the holy sacrifice was offered.

How often does the stranger, in passing through a town or village, turn in at the churchyard gate. He strolls, perhaps, for a few minutes round the ancient edifice, surveying the angelic, or, it may be, the demoniacal faces, that in scorn or complacency seem to be looking down upon him from the walls; reads one or two of the oldest inscriptions that come in his way, and again pursues his journey; but when one of those retired abodes of the dead we occasionally meet with beguiles the traveller from his destined course, he wanders about as though detained by an invisible spell, or seats himself in the antique porch, forgetful of his fatigue and destination.

Our churchyards are generally to be found in the centre of the town or village, surrounded by the ordinary din and tumult of business. How unlike the cemeteries of the East—how unlike those of Turkey, which, far from human habitation, are frequently met with on the summit of a hill, sometimes in the desert, sometimes amidst rocks and precipices. Beneath groves of cypress, which spread their dark and graceful foliage over the graves, may be seen the bereaved widow seated on the

ground, with uncovered face, and, in the stillness that surrounds her, giving vent to the deep anguish of her soul. In Egypt, the burial-ground is commonly a mile or more from the city. Such are the Tombs of the Caliphs at Cairo; such those of the Kings of ancient Thebes. The traveller sometimes meets a funeral procession in the field as he roams the almost pathless waste; and often so picturesque and elevated is the place of interment, that hill and dale open upon him with the most imposing effect. We need not, however, travel so far to find an appropriate burial-ground. It is to be met with in the Highlands of Scotland, far removed from the noise of the multitude—sometimes in the desolate glen—sometimes overhanging the sea or creek, with the wild heather waving upon the graves. One of the most interesting graveyards is said to be near Culloden Muir, on the southern slope of the downs of Kilmuir. Who would not love to repose here in the twilight of a summer evening, even though he claimed no alliance, no sympathy with the grave? Who, even amid the gayest, could not roam in such a spot, if not in the pleasing melancholy of sorrow, in the exercise of pure and unalloyed reflection?

To picture death vividly, we must contrast it strongly with life; not the life we recognize in the tumult and din of the busy street, but the life that presents itself in the seclusion of nature. The more secluded the retreat, the more distinctly we see the development and progress of living objects. Poets, like painters, have not always bestowed on their landscapes a true colouring of light and shade. Why has the aged yew always been pictured as the most appropriate companion of the dead? True, its sombre branches cast a shade that harmonizes with whatever is sad and solemn; but the simple daisy that blossoms on the tufted grave affords a far more affecting sight to the true mourner. To give the grave its true

effect, we should decorate it with the gayest flowers of the passing year. There should be the budding rose, blushing to meet the gaze of heaven ; and, as the varied seasons move round, there should follow a succession of flowers, ever fresh and fair. This would afford a perfect contrast to the sentiment of death, and render the scene at all times interesting and impressive.

It is easy to picture such a situation as seems suited to the final resting-place of the departed. It should, at least, be a place of retirement, where nothing should be heard but what the voice of nature dictates, unless it be the deep-toned bells from some far tower, whose solemn notes are etherealized by the winds that bear them on their wings to the ear of the mourner. Not even the distant murmur of human traffic should be heard. If the tempest should awake in its fury, it will cradle the restlessness of sorrow ; if the angry ocean waves are heard lashing the shore, they will convert the cry of agony into melancholy repose. Not only should the spot be consecrated to solitude, but the gorgeous imagery of nature should add its sacred influence, as though in mockery of death itself. To induce the stranger to stop and survey so interesting a scene, how little should we need the invitation inscribed on the monuments of Greece and Rome,—“ Pause, traveller.” In this quiet seclusion would be seen the aged parent bending over the graves of his children, and, in the plenitude of his grief, uttering a pious wish to depart and be united to them again. Here would be seen the tender child weeping over the ashes of departed parents ; the bright form of beauty would be there too, gracefully reposing on the tomb of some loved one ; and the frantic lover would be seen pacing, with uneven steps, the resting-place of consumption’s beauteous victim.

How few are the wants of man to which the world

does not minister : to his love of pleasure, to his love of gain, to his love of knowledge. How clearly historians unfold to him past events. With what pleasure we read their descriptions of ancient edifices, and what a train of sacred feelings we call into existence on beholding the various monuments of genius which past centuries have built up. The things that have been and are not, still awaken our admiration. Who has not heard of the ruins of Karnac, of Luxor, and of Thebes? With what melancholy delight do we gaze on the ivied walls of the old castle, and the hoary turrets of the ancient temple. With what reverential feelings do we revisit the spot where our early years were passed ; how we surround it again with the various objects and incidents peculiar to childhood, and picture with nicest accuracy the actors in those scenes of innocent enjoyment. We associate all places, all objects, and all modes of feeling, which the mind has once recognized during the exercise of deep-felt emotion, with the same sentiments they severally inspired. To everything we attach a portion of our moral and intellectual existence, and from everything thus endowed we receive back the life we gave. Surely, then, the final resting-place of man should be so far removed from the daily routine of life as to allow the mourner to shed the tear of sorrow unseen, and the contemplative mind to ponder in silence on the universal lot.

THE END.

